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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Youssouf Ouédraogo, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to offer the profound condolences of Burkina Faso to Algeria and the Dominican Republic following the disasters that have struck those countries.

I would like to convey to you, Sir, my heartfelt, warm congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau, as well as Mr. Harri Holkeri, President at the fifty-fifth session, for the outstanding efforts that he made during his term of office.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a resounding tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, whose noteworthy re-election to the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations confirms the exceptional qualities that he possesses as a diplomat and tireless champion of peace and justice in the world. The Nobel Peace Prize, which has just been awarded to him, is eloquent testimony to that.

Last year, the leaders of the world met here to give new impetus to our Organization and to commit the international community to mobilizing itself more resolutely in the quest for international peace and security and to fighting poverty, injustice and other scourges that threaten the very existence of humankind.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September which struck the United States and plunged the American people, as well as other peoples throughout the world, into grief truly marked a turning point in the development of international relations. They were a brutal and atrocious reminder of both the complexity of problems facing humankind and the urgent need to find appropriate solutions to them. Burkina Faso firmly and unambiguously condemned those barbaric, criminal and repugnant acts, and we condemn them still. Furthermore, we are resolved to take part in any initiatives undertaken by the international community to eradicate terrorism and its causes. That is why Burkina Faso has begun the process of ratifying the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, as well as United Nations conventions on this subject.

My Government has just adopted a draft law with a view to ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the first, second and third protocols thereto, relating, respectively, to the smuggling of migrants; trafficking in persons, particularly women and children; and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in weapons. In cooperation with the United Nations, Ouagadougou will be hosting, from 28 to 30 November, a seminar for the foreign ministers and ministers of justice of the

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countries of the Economic Community of West African States, the aim of which is to accelerate the ratification of that Convention.

If it is to be effective, the campaign against terrorism must be part of a coherent and solid world coalition, with its basis in the United Nations. At the same time, it must take into consideration the realities and constraints confronting international relations. In other words, in addition to military action, the campaign must include the most appropriate political and diplomatic measures in order effectively to deal with conflicts and regional political problems and to reduce gross injustice and inequality which, because of the frustration they generate, serve as a breeding ground for extremists and fuel violence and hatred.

As our mobilization to fight terrorism must be total, so also must we see to the prior definition of clear objectives and appropriate methods for their implementation. While it is true that terrorists are our enemies, it is also true that the manner in which we combat them should not provide them with allies. As President Blaise Compaore recently stated:

> "As we see it, there is a risk that, if we are not careful, the responses to the events of 11 September might lead to a catastrophic scenario for humanity, with a tangled web of conflict: conflict between the Judeo-Christian world and the Muslim world; conflict between West and East; conflict between the rich North and the poor South. It is therefore crucial for our current leaders courageously to attack the injustices and inequalities which fuel violence and hatred."

The international community must therefore resolutely commit itself to combating poverty, epidemics, in particular HIV/AIDS, and economic and commercial marginalization, as well as exclusion of all kinds, which continue to be the daily lot of many regions of the world.

Attacking these injustices means necessarily that we have to find a solution to the question of the Middle East. The right of the Palestinians to establish an independent State, respectful of the existence and security of Israel, is a sine qua non here. Because of the continuing tension in that part of the world, convening a special international conference on the subject at the earliest possible date is necessary.

It is also essential to lift the iniquitous embargoes imposed on some States, such as Libya, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, and Cuba. For, not only do these embargoes cause suffering to their people, but they also help to weaken world peace and security.

The Republic of China in Taiwan, which has demonstrated sufficiently that it is a democratic and peaceful State, is prepared to play its rightful role in the concert of nations, and it should no longer suffer from the injustice that we are combating each day. That is why, in the name of equality among peoples and nations, we make an urgent appeal for the readmission of the Republic of China to the United Nations.

Turning to the question of Western Sahara, Burkina Faso has always supported United Nations initiatives and efforts here. Accordingly, the recent plan proposed by Mr. James Baker, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, seems to us to be an acceptable political compromise for a constructive negotiating basis.

One activity that fuels and sustains conflicts and serious banditry in the world is the manufacture, sale and circulation of arms and anti-personnel mines. Burkina Faso firmly supports the actions taken by the United Nations aimed at reaching general and complete disarmament, both at the level of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. As for combating the proliferation of light weapons, in addition to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium to which it subscribes, Burkina Faso has set up a high authority responsible for monitoring throughout our national territory the import and use of weapons.

Africa has decided to further unite. It has decided to bring closer together its peoples and economies and to strengthen its partnership with other regions in order to better integrate itself in the world economy. The African Union was set up precisely to accomplish this huge project. Burkina Faso reiterates here the appeal made by the heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for the effective support of the international community for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The debate in the United Nations should enable all Member States to express themselves and contribute to the discussion on how best to meet the concerns of humanity. All opinions must be heard and taken into consideration. Decisions taken pursuant to the rules

must also be applied by each Member State. This is the sine qua non requirement for achieving a viable new international order based on a necessary dialogue among civilizations and a culture of sharing and solidarity. This new world order, in order to be more just, has to be based on two basic concepts. First of all, there should be a reform of the United Nations to provide a more collective and democratic way of managing the affairs of the world. Secondly, there should be a more equitable distribution of the world's resources, through revision of trade mechanisms and financing for development.

Turning to the reform of the Security Council, Burkina Faso reaffirms Africa's position, which resulted from the Harare Summit, advocating equitable representation of all regions of the world and guaranteeing greater transparency and effectiveness for the United Nations.

Our world is in constant flux. The ardent desire for peace and security and the search for democracy and well-being are, with each passing day, becoming ever more rooted in people's minds. During the past few years, Burkina Faso has undertaken wide-ranging political and economic reforms, which are in keeping with the permanent validity of these universal values.

Politically, the reforms undertaken by the Government, based on a consensus approach, have enabled it to improve the institutional environment and to meet the expectations of the political class and civil society. This involves in particular the status of the opposition, new voting procedures, the single-ballot system, financing for political parties, trade unions and the private press, and the creation of the Constitutional Council, the State Council, the Appeals Court, the State Audit Office and an independent national electoral commission.

Economically speaking, the Government is constantly struggling to improve the living conditions of our people. Need I recall that destitution and poverty are the first way we deny human rights. They deny human beings their main raison d'être: their dignity. Therefore, we have decided to stress the struggle against poverty and exclusion by working out, with our development partners, a strategic framework to fight poverty.

In our global village, happiness for everyone is possible. The best of possible worlds is within our grasp. Scientific and technological progress means that we can overcome the ills that beset humanity. We simply need to unite, show solidarity and act together.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hassan Wirayuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

Mr. Wirayuda (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session. We are pleased that the stewardship of this session has been entrusted to so capable a diplomat from a fraternal Asian country, with which Indonesia has always enjoyed the most cordial of relations.

I wish to preface my statement by expressing once again, on behalf of the Government and people of Indonesia, our deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of the United States with regard to the massive tragedy that they suffered recently, and have borne so admirably.

Indeed, international terrorism today looms on the horizon as one of the major threats to human life and civilization. The truth, of course, is that multiple threats and challenges are an inherent and coexisting feature of inter-State relations. We cannot grapple with this threat and leave other threats to wreak havoc on the world. It is the urgent and compelling task of this world Organization to address them all, for each of them has the potential to destroy a large part, if not all, of the human race.

The threat of nuclear annihilation is still there. It has by no means faded with the demise of the cold war, as the campaign for nuclear disarmament remains stalled. With conventional weapons, mostly small arms, wars and other forms of mass violence are being carried out in various parts of the world. Thus, whole populations — involving millions — are being displaced, maimed or killed, 90 percent of whom are civilians, and the majority of them women, children and the elderly.

In the Middle East, the killing of innocent Palestinians continues even while Israeli forces partially withdraw from occupied Palestinian towns. For as long as the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination is being violated with impunity, there can be no lasting peace in that part of the world.

In the economic sphere, we have not been able to solve the basic problem of poverty in spite of the fact

that we have the resources and the technical capability to at least wage an effective war against this scourge of humankind.

The economies of South-East Asia have just begun to recover from the devastation of a global financial crisis that erupted just a few years ago and already we are facing the unwelcome prospect of its possible recurrence. New international architectures that would shield vulnerable economies from such a crisis remain a distant dream. The global economic environment is simply getting less hospitable to the aspirations of the developing world for growth. Without the resources and technology for sustainable development, developing countries are rapidly losing their natural resources, while the physical environment of the world continues to deteriorate.

To us Indonesians, these global problems become even more poignant as they are replicated in our country and as they impact on the lives of our people. In the financial crisis of 1997-1998, as the rupia plummeted in value and factories and businesses closed down, millions lost their jobs and were reduced to abject poverty. Since then, our economy has begun to recover. Last year, Indonesia enjoyed an economic growth of some 5 per cent, in contrast to the 13.5 per cent contraction that followed the onset of the financial crisis in 1997. Also, in the year 2000, Indonesia attained a level of trade that surpassed those achieved before the crisis. However, the current global economic downturn, compounded by the events of 11 September, has lowered the expected target for economic growth to 3 per cent in 2001.

In the face of these realities, we need massive direct investment flows in order to consolidate our recovery and march steadily on the road of development. We feel that the situation in Indonesia today already merits the confidence of investors, but we can barely make a good case for this in the light of lingering threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our Republic.

Like many other developing countries — and, indeed, some developed countries — Indonesia needs to overcome the problem of graft and corruption in its bureaucracies and in the corporate sector. The deficiencies of our legal system and judiciary and the past human rights record of our police and military establishment have produced less than optimum conditions for Indonesia's economic recovery. These are daunting challenges, as daunting as the global problems that they replicate and reflect.

Yet, in confronting these national problems, I do not despair, just as I do not despair in contemplating the global challenges and problems of our time. I believe that all these problems, global and national, can be traced to a single common root — a deficiency in human relationships — for wherever there is inequality and it is not acceptable to the weaker party, there can only be tension and conflict. Wherever the powerful can get away with exploiting the weak, a sense of outrage smoulders and there can be neither stability nor peace. Wherever there is injustice and it is not redressed, there arises a culture of vengeance.

If the problem is basically an imbalance in human relationships, then the solution lies in the rectification of that imbalance — in the recognition that all human beings are of equal worth and have basically equal rights before the law of God and human law. As they are all equals, each is accountable for what he does to any other and everyone's common sense of justice is satisfied.

This solution is not something I discovered on my way to this forum. It is something that we all have known for a very long time now, and we have been calling it democracy. Against the expectations of many outside — and, indeed, within —our own nation over the past three years, and especially the last six months, and in the midst of our financial crisis, Indonesia has relentlessly pursued the difficult process of reform and democratization. We have been able to manage successive transitions of power in a democratic, peaceful and constitutional manner.

Thus, Indonesia today stands proud as one of the largest democracies in the world. As a nation with an overwhelmingly Muslim population, we are the living refutation of the erroneous notion that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Islam has always stood for the equality and fraternity of all human beings and for the optimum exercise of the human will. If only in that, we Indonesians have a natural affinity for democracy.

The challenge for all of us is to ensure that democracy works and that it does actually deliver a better life for the people. In the case of Indonesia, pivotal to this outcome is the recent introduction of bold and far-reaching measures on the relationship between the central Government and regional

authorities in order to address the legitimate aspirations of the societies in the region. Likewise, my Government has made a democratic response to the challenge of separatism in Aceh and Irian Jaya.

We will sincerely bring redress for their grievances. We will meet their legitimate demands by introducing special autonomy and a greater sharing of resources, and guarantee respect for their culture and ethnic identities. We will not, however, tolerate any acts of terror or violence for separatist ends against the territorial integrity and national unity of our Republic. In this regard, Members of this Organization have extended overwhelming support for Indonesia's territorial integrity and national unity, consistent with the principle of the territorial integrity of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Through the strict and impartial enforcement of recently passed anti-graft laws, we are cleansing our bureaucracy and corporate sector of the taint of graft and corruption. Through strict and equal application of laws on economic reform, we assure every entrepreneur an equal chance in his business undertakings.

We are reforming the legal system and the judiciary so that every individual stands equal before the law, whoever his adversary in litigation may be. Both the police and the military have undergone reform and have proven themselves to be faithful to the Constitution and to the democratic process. They have the encouragement of my Government and the Indonesian people as they continue reforming themselves.

We will see to it, however, that those who have perpetrated human rights violations, including those who carried out the gross human rights violations in East Timor in the wake of the popular consultation, are brought to justice. Thus, immediately after assuming office, President Megawati Soekarnoputri signed an amending presidential decree that would enable, starting next month, an ad hoc human rights court to adjudicate cases of human rights abuses prior to and following the popular consultation.

These are the main lines of our democratic response to the many and formidable challenges that Indonesia must contend with. I have no illusions that they will be met without difficulty and occasional setbacks, but I have faith in the rightness of working for human relationships that are based on the equality of individual human worth. It is the decent, enlightened thing to do. I therefore have no doubt that, ultimately, these measures will yield sufficiently positive results to move us forward on the road of development.

I am no less confident that the democratic response will be just as effective in addressing the global challenges of our time. Consider the problem of armed conflicts in various parts of the world. The use of violence against other human beings, whether carried out through nuclear weapons or through small arms, is an assertion of a view that those others have no equal right to life. That is why violence is escalating everywhere and that is why there are terrorists — madmen who regard the lives of innocent people as worthless compared to their political agenda. In a democratic setting, where everyone is committed to equality and every human life is as precious as any other, violence cannot thrive, certainly not on a massive scale.

If the nuclear disarmament agenda has not been moving forward, it is because the nuclear Powers enjoy a real advantage over everybody else and those that are nuclear-capable strive to become nuclear Powers themselves. Inequality thus becomes an incentive for nuclear proliferation. In a democratic setting, that incentive is not available.

The same is true with respect to the endeavours to reform the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. So long as the present permanent members see others as not equal to themselves and act on that basis, there will never be equitable representation on the Council. To say that we are reforming the world Organization in order to make it more democratic is to put the cart before the horse. First, let us all embrace democracy and then it will not be difficult to reform the United Nations.

In the economic sphere, the fundamental challenge is simply to create a level playing field for all nations, whether it be in trade or international financial flows. We may all be paying lip service to the sovereign equality of all nations, but if a reality check shows that multilateralism is on the wane, that in fact means that a good number of developed nations do not really believe that the developing countries thus deprived are their equals.

International financial flows for development will resume, the debt burden of poor countries will be eased and barriers to the exports of developing countries will

be lifted if and when the entire developed world sincerely regards the developing countries as true equals, and not as recipients of charity. Since people in developing countries, particularly those that are most vulnerable, are down today, they need a helping hand to raise them to a position commensurate with their dignity as equal human beings. In this regard, a special case could be made for the teeming millions in the countries of Africa, a continent that has already given so much of itself to the rest of the world.

The principle of equality among all human beings must be applied as well in the use of natural resources and its profound impact on the environment. It would be the cruellest form of inequality if the present imbalances in the use of resources among nations were left unaddressed and if the present generation were to use the earth's resources and leave nothing to sustain future generations of humanity.

This yearning for democracy has been with us for a long time. It is the spirit behind every reform movement, the French and American revolutions and the struggle of colonized countries for independence, Indonesia among them.

This is the spirit to which the first generation of leaders of Asia and Africa gave voice in Bandung in 1955. It guided the founding and the growth of the Non-Aligned Movement and brought about the demise of apartheid.

In my region, South-East Asia it gave rise to the birth and growth of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), just as it earlier ushered in the founding and enlargement of the United Nations. It is what we need today to reform the United Nations, to make it a more effective instrument of global peace and development. It is what we need to translate into concrete reality the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. And, indeed, the democratic spirit is what we need in order to wage an effective struggle against the dark forces of international terrorism. Without that spirit, we can only fail.

The best course, therefore, would be to launch collective action on the basis of the United Nations Charter. For this war against international terrorism to be able to cover all fronts and to be sustainable and imbued with long-term legitimacy, it is imperative that the United Nations play an active and primary role. The global campaign should be complemented at the regional level by coordinated efforts such as those launched by ASEAN just over a week ago. In that way, we will ensure that our response to terrorism is a democratic one.

Indonesia has consistently emphasized the role of the United Nations in addressing the unfolding developments in Afghanistan. It therefore welcomes the adoption yesterday by the Security Council of resolution 1378 (2001), for this development represents manifest recognition of the need to enhance political and diplomatic efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the Afghan crisis. At the same time, however, it is important to underline that the role of the United Nations can only be to support the efforts of the Afghan people themselves, most notably in the establishment of a new and transitional administration that is broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative of all the Afghan people. For its part, Indonesia is committed to supporting the United Nations in these noble endeavours. Indonesia stands ready to contribute to any future peacekeeping operations needed to support peace-building in Afghanistan.

To my mind there is no question of whether the democratic response will work as a way of resolving this problem and all the other global problems of our time. Nothing else will work. The question is whether we are courageous, sincere and enlightened enough to apply it.

History, it has been said, is a race between enlightenment and catastrophe. Let us become enlightened now, before catastrophe overtakes us.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Eduard Kukan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia.

Mr. Kukan (Slovakia): At the outset, I wish to join other speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It is my deep conviction that in this difficult situation we will, under your experienced leadership, materialize the expectations of the international community, which has always desired to view the United Nations as a reliable guarantor of world peace. I recall our recent meeting in Seoul, and it is a pleasure for me to see you, Sir, presiding over the General Assembly this year. I also wish to thank your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his hard work, dedication and leadership in presiding over the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The recent brutal terrorist attack against our host country, which has left all of us in deep shock, was undoubtedly also directed against the United Nations and its principles and values, which we as Member States share. This inhuman act was an attack on all of us. However, it has united the international community, which realized the potential danger and threat of terrorism to the existence of human civilization. The international community has responded in the only way appropriate: international terrorism cannot be tolerated; all the nations of the world must stand united in the battle against this evil; and they have to search vigorously for ways to effectively respond to it.

We were relieved to see the United Nations acting promptly and in a very determined way, adopting the very next day General Assembly and Security Council resolutions urging the international community to redouble its efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts by increased cooperation and full implementation of the relevant international anti-terrorist conventions and Security Council resolutions. In particular, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is of a great importance and must be fully implemented.

We appreciate that after the terrorist attacks, countries and international organizations have manifested moral maturity and their capacity to closely cooperate and coordinate their actions in the fight against world terrorism. We welcome the active and irreplaceable role the United Nations plays in this fight. As United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan explicitly stated in his response to the arrogant and disdainful words of bin Laden addressed to the United Nations, people will understand that the position of the United Nations is the expression of the will of all its Members.

A year ago, many of my colleagues and I elaborated on the role of the United Nations in combating international terrorism. The Slovak Republic joined the anti-terrorist coalition swiftly, effectively and without any hesitation. It will remain a firm part of the coalition of nations and people resolved to fight terrorism and determined to face this threat to peace and security on our planet. The Slovak Republic is a party to 11 of the 12 universal anti-terrorist conventions. Shortly, we hope to ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which we signed last January. We call on all other countries to redouble their efforts in order to achieve a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

The terrorist attack has certainly changed our perception of the world. A re-assessment of international arrangements is a necessity in this context. After a period of mostly emotional reactions, we now need more qualified answers, supported by resolve and responsibility. I am convinced that the resolve and responsibility will be translated into executive actions and systemic steps by the United Nations.

The legal instruments devised here at the United Nations constitute an especially good basis for deepening the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism. Using the words of the aphorist Blaise Pascal, I want to emphasize that the only thing that remains to be done is to implement all the good principles that have already been laid down. It is encouraging that the words of comfort and the ideas and commitments uttered by high representatives of the Member States of this, the most universal international community, overwhelmingly share that spirit. Slovakia fully associates itself with those views. In that context, we wish to express our hope that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court will enter into force sometime next year. With that the international community will be establishing a body that will end impunity for crimes of the greatest seriousness, including crimes against humanity.

The world has a unique opportunity to achieve progress in tackling long-lasting conflicts through joint efforts. Slovakia considers United Nations peacekeeping operations to be one of the key and most visible aspects of the Organization's activities. We view all United Nations activities in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace support and peace-building as particularly important. It is the people in the regions suffering from conflict who look to our Organization with hope, and we must not let them down.

As a country that is materially and personally involved, we welcome with great attention and devotion and participate actively in the discussions aimed at reforming and improving the efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping. We are ready to continue contributing our share in every possible way to this noble endeavour. The participation of the Slovak Republic in United Nations peacekeeping operations

has grown almost six-fold since the beginning of the year 2000. This year we took part in the United Nations mission in East Timor, where we deployed a level II hospital. In Cyprus the Slovak contingent has replaced Austria and has become the lead nation in Sector 4. We have sent our demining experts and other personnel to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

I would also like to add my personal note to this description of my country's engagement. For the past two years, the Secretary-General has entrusted me with an exceptionally demanding and responsible task, namely, to serve as his Special Envoy for the Balkans and to oversee the peaceful resolution of the still-smouldering conflict in Kosovo. I am aware of the critical importance of the coming elections to be held in Kosovo under the supervision of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I am now therefore in a position to state a single critical thesis: that area must stay multi-ethnic and the international community must continue to be consistent in its policies on the matter.

As a country that is experiencing dynamic development and one that shares a great interest in stable international development and the prosperity of the international community, Slovakia also has an ambition to play a more visible role in the United Nations. Our Prime Minister, Mikuláš Dzurinda, also clearly expressed our position on many other topics and challenges at last year's Millennium Summit. The spirit of the commendable initiatives adopted at the Summit will produce the best results only through their unrestricted practical implementation, although new and unprecedented barriers have emerged on the way.

Our position on the issue of Security Council reform is linked to the importance of making the Organization more effective. Let us be honest and admit that we have not been fully successful in achieving this goal for years, and that we will now have to cope with new and unprecedented challenges. In my letter to the previous President of the General Assembly I emphasized that, in addition to maintaining sufficient representativeness, the Security Council should also preserve sufficient operational flexibility. We also believe that the Security Council should base its decision-making on majority voting, and that the right of veto should only be reserved for decisions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Slovakia supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both the non-permanent and the permanent categories of membership. However, the failure to achieve consensus on the enlargement of one category should not result in blocking enlargement in another category. I avail myself of this opportunity to confirm that while increasing the number of Security Council members in the category of elected non-permanent members, we consider it fully justified to allocate one additional seat to the Group of Eastern European States. Its membership has doubled in the last decade.

Exceptionally urgent current challenges have cast a malicious shadow of destruction over this year's agenda of the General Assembly, which I have not commented on in detail. I would like, however, to assure the Assembly that Slovakia believes in the need for a universal world organization — which the United Nations is — as a source of hope for a better and more just world. We have no doubts about the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in tackling global issues, be it the protection of human rights, the eradication of famine, poverty, diseases and illiteracy or the prevention of drug and arms proliferation or guaranteeing sustainable development. A life of dignity for all of us is really unthinkable without the enduring involvement of the United Nations. However, it requires universal respect of its paramount place in international life, and joint cooperation in intensifying its activities.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the feeling of deep satisfaction of my country, and me personally, with the appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan to serve a second term as the United Nations Secretary-General. I also wish to voice our recognition of the honour given to him personally and to our universal world Organization through the prestigious and well-deserved award of the centenary Nobel Peace Prize, and to congratulate him wholeheartedly on this achievement.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel.

Mr. Peres (Israel): First of all, I would really like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I know that you bring with you a wealth of experience, a breadth of understanding and hope for many people. I would also like to express my highest regard for

Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his well-deserved recognition as Nobel Prize Laureate for his fresh ideas and great vision on how to meet a new world with an open mind, a sense of unity and hope.

There is hidden light and needed hope in this gathering to overturn the darkness that has descended upon us. There is enough strength and resolve in the midst of civilized nations to deflect evil.

Humanity woke up happy to welcome the twenty-first century. We turned around and looked, and there was brightness and freshness in the air. We had departed from a traditional history that was written with red ink — wars, skirmishes, conflicts and murders — many of which arose because human existence was dependent upon land and natural resources. We have had to protect our own lands.

Modern science emerged to supersede land, opening new horizons of limitless opportunities. Science rendered borders marginal, and old prejudices and distances began to dissipate from our minds. Technology created a new interdependence. No longer were our connections dependent upon land or sea — upon distance. Air became the new means of communication for nations, peoples, businesses and development. High technology introduced new promises and recalled the importance of old values.

The perception was that every person, irrespective of location, race, religion or sex, could reach new heights. And then we learned that high technology is not just a technical matter. We cannot separate technology from values; it is impossible.

For example, you cannot combine lies and science. You cannot lie scientifically. To have a science-based economy, you have to pursue peace uncompromisingly and openness uninterruptedly. Science requires an open society; it demands constant dialogue. You cannot have new innovations without unrestricted research. You cannot have unrestricted research without being a free society. You cannot develop a scientific economy without making education a top priority, available and accessible to all people. You cannot attract investment unless you have transparency.

In a competitive world, to keep young scientists your land and water should be free from pollution, your financial system free from corruption, your government without arbitrariness. Truth, freedom and openness became conditions for science and high technology and, consequently, for the advancement of any society.

It is true that the world is still divided between the haves and the have nots. But for the have nots, a new option is that of becoming connected to the new age and the more developed aspects of our times.

There had been a new beginning, but like many beginnings, one mixed with shadows and revolt. The shadows were not yet heavy; at the beginning they looked pale and distant. So we felt like one promised world, like one assembly. The economy was no longer national; it became global — open to every nation. And since we could not form a global government, the national Governments agreed that the global economy would be managed by private enterprises — hence, privatization. Globalization decreased the importance of traditional States and increased the importance of non-governmental organizations and worldwide connections. It looked as if borderless progress was evolving. And then ambushing clouds, global in nature, moved in as a new horror.

The horrific events of 11 September — the savage attack on innocent American people — signalled a new warning to world history. On 11 September, we learned that the very same technology I mentioned earlier — openness and a frontier-less, connected world — could also spread viciousness. This attack was brutal, because it was directed at everything we stand for, against everything for which nations, and the United Nations, have toiled.

The emerging terror, like the emerging economy, is no longer national or delineated by boundaries. Rather, it is borderless, and it contains unlimited, awesome potential. It can begin with knives, and it may wind up with germs. Terror does not have a visible address, a merciful lord in heaven, a court or an elected government. Nor does it need the approval of the many. It is built on the fanaticism of a small group of murderers, lacking the checks and balances of an accountable society. It may arrive unexpectedly, uninvited, spreading fear in every corner of the globe, paralysing us at work and home, grounding flights, impeding movement, disrupting commerce and production. Eventually, it can endanger the freshness of air, the purity of water.

Global economy arrived as an historic surprise; global terrorism also arrived without prior warning. But, whereas a solution was found to regulate the

global economy, through privatization, there is no private answer to meet global terrorism. Many nations have armies, without necessarily having enemies. Yet, for the time being, global dangers remain without global answers or global armies.

The United States played the pivotal role in introducing the new economy. Now again, it falls upon the United States, as the first target of global terrorism, to offer a strategy, to take the lead and to bring back the promise of freedom and security to many of us.

We pay tribute to the United States, a nation that had the capacity to welcome new modes of creativity, planning, production and innovation at home and abroad. And while becoming mighty, it did not stop caring for the rest of the world. The United States has helped nations in Europe and Asia and elsewhere regain freedom and security in times of danger.

American boys fought, and many of them lost their lives, in European and Asian wars. They won wars and gained land, but they did not keep those assets for themselves. They returned to Japan an improved Japan. They returned to Germany an improved Germany. The Marshall Plan helped to rebuild Europe. Needy countries were offered food and assistance, industries were restored, economies were rehabilitated. There was generosity in their victory. Indeed, America has emerged as the "indispensable nation".

Now America has become a target for reasons which are not necessarily its own. Terrorism was directed at America to frustrate its democracy, weaken its respect for human rights, reduce its enterprise and threaten its individualism so that it would not be able to help others. This was an assault on the very existence of humanity.

The bin Laden group are afraid of progress. They are proponents of backwardness. They want us to return to living in caves. They represent the darkest ages in the annals of human history. They are self-appointed killers of any persons who think differently from them. They are not just evil — they are an agency of death.

America is not just a new world or continent — it is a great constitution, a shining city on the hill of freedom. It is not just a concrete structure — it is a solid idea. You can attack America, hurt it, but America cannot be destroyed.

America's war on terrorism is the war of all of us. By "us", I mean every country in this Assembly and every human being on this planet. Bin Laden claims that he fights crusaders, who no longer exist. Bin Laden claims that he wants to help the Palestinians, but in the eyes of the Palestinians, he is an obstacle, not an aid.

Israel made peace with Egypt and returned all the land and water without bin Ladens, without terror. We did likewise with the Jordanians — not because of terror, but because terror came to an end. At Camp David in July 2000, we offered the Palestinians practically all the land without bin Ladens, without terror. And if there remained a difference of 1 or 2 per cent, that does not justify the killing of thousands of men and women in America. Political differences do not justify murdering even a single child, no matter of which nation.

Bin Laden and his abhorrent ideas can never contribute to peace. They offer no solution and no hope to any nation, religion or person. They spread hatred, disseminate fear and plant mines. They are a catastrophe at large.

The new world economy enabled two of the most populous countries — China and India — to move forward and offer new life and opportunity to hundreds of millions of people. It has changed the face of Europe. It has reversed the fortunes of Latin America. It has extended an open invitation to every country to acquire computers, widen education, open its gates and join a new age without giving up its old values and traditions. The new world economy called for an assembly of responsible nations to build a dam against terror, knowing perfectly well that the fight against terror cannot be postponed, cannot be forgiven, cannot be compromised. It is a matter of life and death for humanity in the new chapter of our existence.

All of us, nations and individuals, will either contribute to safety and freedom or become targets of death and backwardness. Every country must choose its place in the new world, either in the realm of science and technology or in the wastebasket of the old land economy, dependent on the whims of nature, condemned to the poverty of hopelessness. It is the responsibility of affluent nations to share the wealth of knowledge so that others can join them. Rich countries should become a locomotive for the deprived, not a luxury liner for the privileged.

We pray wholeheartedly from the great and united city of Jerusalem, as we did in the early days of our existence, that we shall know again how to distinguish between good and evil, between *tohu va'vo-hu* — chaos — and a new tomorrow. Our region gave birth to the greatest prophets, their moral dictums setting the moral fabric of our society. They have guided us to trust and follow reason and realism. But we were forced to follow funerals more than reason. This has exacted a heavy price from Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze. It is time that we rediscovered the Ten Commandments, holy to all of us.

Right now it looks as if we are again sinking into the past. The emotional conflict is greater than the territorial gap. It is more difficult to muster the strength and summon the spirit than to divide the land. In spite of these difficulties, I daresay there is a hidden opportunity in the vast divide. I feel strongly that while we cannot recover lost time, we can introduce a new vista in the Middle East.

Until now, the world related to the Middle East. Now the Middle East has to relate to the new world. Our neighbours — Palestinians and Arabs — know that Israel is committed to contribute whatever it can to renew a real peace process — not by force, not by imposition, not by unilateral action, but through a negotiated agreement, an agreed peace. There is no peace but an agreed peace. Just as one cannot applaud with one hand, there cannot be a one-handed peace.

Problems, naturally, have a date of birth. Solutions must reach their maturity. It may not happen at once, but it will happen. Yesterday, you would hardly find, for example, support for a Palestinian State and, although this is not yet a formal policy of the Government of Israel, there is now support for Palestinian independence and for a Palestinian State. We do not want to dominate the Palestinians; we want them to breathe freedom, to create a new economy, to maintain their traditions, to enjoy the highest level of education and to provide real security to all parties.

As far as Israel is concerned, we are convinced that good neighbours are better than good guns. In modern times, you cannot have real security dependent only on fences, walls, fortifications or trenches; not even on tanks and guns and missiles. All these measures have already become anti-measures, making them incomplete and temporary. The only strategy that cannot be ignored is neighbourly relations, such as the common market in Europe, the Rio Group in Latin America, the North American Free Trade Agreement in North America, the Association of South-East Asian Nations in Asia and the New Partnership for African Development in Africa. All these frameworks have shown that answers to old historical, military and political conflicts may reside in the economic domain.

What endangers the new solution is terror. Terror is again endangering the world. The division is no longer between East and West, North and South, but between the union to stop terror and those who refuse to recognize its menace. The assembly against terror comprises most of humanity: the United States, Europe, China, Russia, India, South America, many countries in Africa and many countries in the Muslim world.

Democracies must have a non-democratic institution to defend themselves. Armies are non-democratic, but without them democracy would not prevail. You may have many views in a democratic society, but only one authority that controls the military and its arms. Armies must be subordinate to the elected political body, but if you have one political authority and several armed groups, you can have neither democracy nor security.

The Palestinian Authority, which is a State in being, must establish one authority over all arms, all armies and all use of arms, not for the sake of Israel, but for the sake of peace and for the sake of its own destiny, so that bullets will not negate ballots.

As long as terror persists, Israel has no choice but to defend its people. The word "terror" does not describe an abstract dilemma for us. It refers to a reality of between 30 to 40 violent incidents every day — shootings, bombings, ambushes and killings. It is perpetrated by suicide bombers who have no respect for life, either their own or that of others. The only place they can be intercepted is at the point from which they depart.

Israel is, by definition, an experienced member of the anti-terror camp. We know that terror can never win if people protect and preserve their fundamental security. Terror is strong as long as anti-terror is weak and terror is frightening as long as people are afraid of it. Terror basically represents cowardliness and does not serve any real purpose. Terror neither follows justice nor serves goals. It is not a remedy; it is a malady.

We are at a juncture. The world is pursuing new opportunities and frontiers. No longer will it be a world divided between developed and underdeveloped nations, black and white or men and women. It will become a world where every person will have access to knowledge and opportunity to participate in the new genesis. States have become weaker economically and strategically because economy and strategy have themselves become global. Yet we do not have organized world institutions to secure the globe and distribute wealth more justly.

Two courses are open to every State: either to join the new economy or to submit to old terror; the creation of wealth or the threat of death. Each must make its own choice between the promise of economy or protest by terror. The Global Compact initiated by the Secretary-General offers us a road map to the former. It defines the functions and contributions of the United Nations and imposes responsibilities on all of us — nation States, the private sector and civil society. It provides us with hope that, even as crises exist, obscuring the opportunities just visible from the corner of our eyes, the path to progress is clear to all with the courage to embrace it.

We woke up to the twenty-first century with such optimism. We must overcome the dangers so that our children will again be raised in a world of almost limitless opportunities. It can be done. We have learned in Jerusalem that we can make a promised land into a land of promise for all of us.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to convey our sincere congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on the occasion of his re-election to the post of Secretary-General, as well as on winning the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001. We also congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at the current session and we join those who have already expressed gratitude to Mr. Harri Holkeri for his excellent organization of the fifty-fifth session, which went down in the history of international relations as the Millennium Assembly.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place in special circumstances. There is no doubt that the tragic events of 11 September represent an objective reality that has prompted the international community to critically reassess the situation, which requires the elaboration of common positions in the combat against international terrorism, based on the provisions of the United Nations Charter on safeguarding comprehensive peace and security.

Today, it is evident that terrorism is related to extremism of every stripe — political, religious and ethnic — as well as to separatism and drug trafficking. These are the principle threats to the present and future of humankind, a plague of the twenty-first century that can enter any household. No one carries insurance against this evil.

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of the indivisibility of security. In accordance with this fundamental principle and in view of the current international situation, Uzbekistan commits itself to go all the way in its fight against terrorism as a global phenomenon. Only through joint, coordinated efforts of the entire international community can we eradicate this evil. No one has the right to stand aloof from this battle.

We are acutely aware that, today, it is absolutely unacceptable to content ourselves with mere declarations and statements. It is time we supported our words with action. Before it is too late, we must take this opportunity to quit the cautious and defensive stance adopted in the struggle against international terrorism and to go on the offensive.

Such an approach is also dictated by a simple and obvious truth: it is impossible to come to an agreement with terrorists. Not only modern experience in combating terrorism but also the experience of history attest to this fact. The only way to deal with terrorists is to isolate them and stand up to them in the most uncompromising and resolute way.

Given the nature of international terrorism and its extensive organizational and financial network as well as its considerable material and technical resources, it is essential to devise a global counter-terrorist strategy that will clearly define the following: first, the parameters of an effective legal framework as well as the organizational foundations for international cooperation in this area; and secondly, forms of concrete joint action at both the global and regional levels as well as on a bilateral basis.

Recent events have demonstrated clearly that terrorism is the most dangerous and treacherous enemy

of the international community. I think it may be relevant to remind Members of the address that the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Karimov, made to the General Assembly on 8 September 2000 from this rostrum. He sounded the alarm, trying to draw the attention of the international community to the

> "... war in Afghanistan, which has continued for more than 20 years ... Afghanistan has become a training ground and hotbed of international terrorism and extremism, and the main source and the warehouse of world drug production, which earns billions of dollars and fuels international terrorism." (*A/55/PV.7, p. 15*)

He also emphasized that this is "a threat to the security not only of the States of Central Asia, but of the whole world". He unambiguously pointed to the particular danger that the world would face if the terrorists were to gain access to deadly weapons such as chemical, biological and other forms of weapons of mass destruction. Here it is pertinent to ask: Was this not a timely appeal?

Uzbekistan has been actively engaged in cooperation with the anti-terrorist coalition. We consider the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan as, first and foremost, a means to destroy the terrorist bases and camps in that country as well as to eradicate conditions favourable to terrorist activity.

The Uzbek people, being heirs to the great Muslim culture and having made a major contribution to the development and flourishing of Islamic civilization, realize that this operation is not directed against either the people of Afghanistan or the religion of Islam. War has been declared against terrorists and their centres and training grounds, not against the peaceful population.

Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have a long history of neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations going back to antiquity. The Amu Darya River has always united us, not separated us. Uzbekistan has never had a conflict either with the Afghan people or with Afghanistan as a State.

The civil war in Afghanistan, which has continued for three decades and reached its apogee during the short period of Taliban rule, has destroyed the country's economy and caused the Afghan people great distress, and it is a threat to the very existence of Afghanistan as an unified State. We support the efforts of the international community aimed at immediate measures to adopt large-scale programmes for the post-conflict rehabilitation of Afghanistan and concrete humanitarian aid for those who urgently need such assistance in their plight.

Uzbekistan, in close collaboration with the United Nations, is already actively participating in the delivery of international humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. For this purpose, we have provided all the necessary infrastructure, including that in the city of Termez, in immediate proximity to the border of Afghanistan.

Finally, in light of the latest events, including both the acts of terror in the United States and the start of the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, I would like to draw the attention of participants in this session to the Uzbek proposal to establish within the United Nations system an international centre to combat terrorism as a realistic mechanism for taking a collective stand against terrorist aggression.

In discussing the organization of the international struggle against terrorism, we should not forget yet another equally dangerous threat — drug trafficking, the main financial support for terrorist and extremist activities. In recent years, the States of Central Asia have found themselves practically face to face with large-scale aggression unleashed by the international narcotics syndicates. It is perfectly clear that no single country, no matter how powerful its resources, can hope to confront drug trafficking successfully unless it enjoys the broad support of the international community. In our view, international cooperation should be based on mechanisms that are adapted as much as possible to the current situation and are capable not only of neutralizing existing sources of narco-aggression but also, and more important, of preventing them from emerging.

Recognizing the urgent need to intensify the international struggle to face common threats, Uzbekistan accords great significance to the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Central Asia. Given the unstable military and political situation in the region, this problem is emerging as a real threat of continental and global proportions.

In this respect, the functional capabilities of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone — an initiative put forward by Uzbekistan at the forty-eighth

session of the General Assembly in the spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty — are of particular importance. We much appreciate the efforts of the United Nations in supporting the activities of the Regional Group of Experts who are working on the text of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty, and we call upon the General Assembly, its President and the Secretary-General to lend their support to the process of formalizing and adopting decisions on this issue.

Uzbekistan supports the provisions in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General concerning the prevention of armed conflict. We consider them to be fundamental guidelines for consultations on this issue.

We also stand for the earliest completion of the United Nations reform process. We welcome certain areas of progress in the work of the Security Council with regard to ensuring its transparency, the enlargement of its membership and other matters related to enhancing its effectiveness. With a view to increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations and in the interests of preventing and settling crisis situations, it is extremely important to intensify collaboration between the United Nations and regional security institutions, as well as to enhance the work of its own regional offices.

Uzbekistan has an interest in developing and enhancing dialogue and cooperation with all States that display an interest in strengthening peace and stability at the regional and global levels.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Although the embers from the towering infernos which resulted from the attacks on 11 September have not fully died, it may nevertheless be possible to analyse the impact which that horrific disaster has had on international relations and, more particularly, the political, economic, and social consequences which it is likely to have for the world. Such an analysis, it is to be hoped, will instruct us on how we may best respond to these new challenges and pursue the twin goals of global peace and development in this new, twenty-first century.

Mr. President, it augurs well that this examination will be conducted under your guidance, since, coming as you do from the land of the morning calm, you will no doubt bring to bear on our debate not only a fresh and dispassionate view, but also a ray of hope after the long dark night through which we have just passed. My delegation offers you our warmest congratulations and good wishes as you continue to preside over the work of this historic General Assembly, which, though inaugurated in the depths of despair, may yet hold out the promise of salvation for mankind.

It would be remiss of me were I not also to extend our gratitude to your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, who presided with great verve and vigour over the Assembly through very difficult and interesting times. He has contributed much to the revitalization of the General Assembly.

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, I convey our greetings and commendation for his sure and steady leadership of our Organization. The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and the United Nations is a source of great satisfaction and pride for Guyana and, indeed, for the entire membership of this body.

As was so aptly stated by the *Economist* of 15 September, the terrorist attack on the United States altered the geopolitical landscape as indelibly as it did the Manhattan skyline. The world is a changed place since that horrendous event, changed in that we suddenly find, under threat, by unorthodox and hitherto unimaginable means, the values by which our Organization is driven, values the attainment of which have been the object of our onerous and protracted labours for a period extending over many decades. We cannot help but feel a sense of sorrow and shame that such a barbaric act — as the destruction of the World Trade Center and a part of the Pentagon most certainly was — could have occurred in this day and age only a short distance from this house of our common humanity.

Like most leaders of the civilized world, the President of Guyana was swift to condemn this egregious crime. As a small and vulnerable State, with limited ability to defend itself in the event of encroachment on its territorial integrity, Guyana cannot accept the threat or the use of violence to resolve conflicts and disputes, whether inter-State or intra-State. All differences must be settled, as called for in the Charter of the United Nations, by peaceful means, such as those prescribed in Article 33.

The violence which was visited two months ago upon some 5,000 human beings — including many of

our own nationals — in this our host city and, indeed, before that, upon so many other peoples and places in the world, must be not only roundly condemned but also condignly punished. The international community must now develop an arsenal of appropriate legal instruments, including a comprehensive convention against terrorism, to combat this new enemy of our times. The message must be clearly sent to all who would use terrorism to pursue their objectives that their actions will not be tolerated by the Members of this Organization but, instead, will be dealt with firmly with the full force of the law.

At home and in our various regions, we must build defences that are strong enough to keep out terrorism and its concomitants, such as arms and drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime. Within the Caribbean Community, of which Guyana is a member, we have agreed to set up mechanisms for information sharing and coordinated action to deny these criminal elements access to our territories. A regional task force has been established to identify measures necessary to creating a *cordon sanitaire* to help insulate us from their onslaught. This is not an easy mandate since, as the immigration doors in the developed countries become more tightly closed, hundreds of criminals who have grown up in these societies are being deported now to our countries which, because of severe financial and human constraints, are ill-equipped to handle this influx.

Although perhaps not as immediate or striking as these political and security consequences, the economic and social impact of the 11 September disaster has been no less powerful and pervasive. All countries have undoubtedly been affected by the disaster, but small and vulnerable States such as my own will find it especially difficult to cope with the resulting hardship. Our countries, with far fewer alternatives available to them than to the more developed, because of an unfavourable international economic system, high levels of external debt and unequal terms of trade, will suffer disproportionately. The exporters of primary products, now as in the past, are the first to suffer a downturn in the world economy and the last to recover — a process that occurs with a frequency that is altogether too depressing.

These imbalances and asymmetries which seriously affect the progress of developing countries are now likely to become even more pronounced in the rapid process of globalization. Still, as is often said, "It's an ill wind that does not blow some good". We would therefore wish to believe that out of the calamity will come an improvement in our lot. We should not be so foolish, however, as to think that this will happen automatically. Salvation will depend on our willingness to learn from our experience and to do better in the future. From the ashes of the Second World War arose the phoenix of the United Nations, giving hope to new generations that they could live in peace, prosperity and larger freedom. Sadly, the end of the cold war did not generate a similarly bold enterprise, leaving humanity to wander aimlessly in search of peaceful coexistence. We must therefore, before it is too late, honour our commitment to the United Nations Charter and create a new vision and strategy with which we may face the challenges of this new era.

In keeping with the spirit and substance of our historic compromise, we must act responsibly to remove from our midst all threats to global peace and security. Foremost among these is the situation in the Middle East, at the core of which is the Palestinian problem, stemming from the persistent denial to an entire people of the enjoyment of their basic and inalienable rights. The peace process must be immediately re-engaged with seriousness of purpose and determination to put an end, once and for all, to the senseless violence and bloodshed which has been the unhappy fate of the Palestinian people and others. They, as well as all other peoples in the region, must be allowed to live in a State of their own, free from fear or want, within safe and secure borders. However, it is not only the Middle East which suffers from the ravages of conflict. In far too many places — in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe, the risk of violence is ever present, fuelled by a variety of factors and made more dangerous by the possibility of further conflagration. To avert these threats, we must fully utilize the machinery provided in the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Yet, it is important in all of this that the Agenda for Peace not be allowed to diminish or to displace the Agenda for Development since, were this to happen, the prospects for any durable peace anywhere would be virtually non-existent. Peace and development are inextricably intertwined, and any attempt to separate them would not only be artificial but totally dangerous. We would do well to bear this in mind should recent events prompt a reordering of global priorities and lead to a diversion of attention from economic and social

issues to purely political and security concerns. Already, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, the President of the World Bank was reported to have said that the 2015 target for halving global poverty could not now be reached and that, in fact, poverty would increase over the next year or two. This deterioration is not easily contemplated by small economies like our own and those of the Caribbean region.

In our view, it is imperative that the United Nations now actively pursue the Agenda for Development to enable developing countries, especially the small and the vulnerable, to ride out the current political and economic storms. The upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place in Monterrey, Mexico, next March, represents a unique opportunity to examine both the internal and external constraints that significantly affect the mobilization of financial resources for development, as well as to collectively address the inefficiencies and inequities of existing financial markets. The high concentration of these markets on existing financial assets aimed at short-term profit, rather than on new assets linked to the creation of wealth and employment for longer-term development, remains a source of great concern and must be remedied.

I think that we all must now acknowledge that the prevailing international system of development cooperation is seriously flawed and has failed to achieve its primary objective of increasing growth and improving the quality of life in poor countries. Inherent in this system are many debt and poverty traps that continue to ensnare millions of the world's poorest people, many of whom now have to face diseases such as AIDS. Not only is the experience painful, but it often also deprives the poor of their basic human rights, there being an undoubted nexus, now universally recognized, between the actualization of human rights and economic development. It is out of this recognition that my delegation, last November, brought resolution 55/48 before the General Assembly on the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order.

The proposal for such an order acknowledges that the major constraints affecting economic and social progress in developing countries reside in the capacity limitation in the critical areas of markets, administrative and institutional infrastructures in both the public and private sectors, the leveraging of resources and the ability of developing countries to negotiate as equal partners in a number of forums outside the United Nations. This proposal therefore seeks to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation programmes, to optimize scarce financial resources and to reduce the spread of poverty. It also addresses new ways of managing development cooperation that would significantly overcome problems of aid dependence, current imbalances and asymmetries in international trade, and the high indebtedness that continues to plague developing countries.

These objectives, in the view of the Government of Guyana, can be achieved through a comprehensive dialogue among Governments, based not only on political and economic considerations, but also on ethical and moral principles that are necessary to the creation of a more humane and just order in the world. This dialogue, which began at the last session of the General Assembly, will be renewed at the fifty-seventh session, when, we hope, the concept will be further embedded in the international consciousness and ultimately accepted as the way forward to a more enlightened system of international relations.

It is entirely appropriate that this dialogue should be held within the United Nations, since the multifaceted and transnational nature of today's challenges requires a multilateral, rather than a unilateral, approach. There is no doubt that the United Nations is ideally suited to promote this global partnership in an environment that today requires firm, focused and inclusive governance. Given the universality of the Organization's membership, the principles and values that it has long upheld and the growing interest of civil society in its activities, the United Nations has a singular opportunity now to exercise a leadership role in international political, social and economic policy-making.

At this time of great uncertainty and trepidation, therefore, we must recognize, now more than ever before, the continuing need for the United Nations Organization which, despite its many achievements in its 56 years of existence, has yet to fulfil its full potential with regard to international cooperation. We must therefore not allow complacency, self-interest or unilateralism to compromise that global vision of the founding Members.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alhaji Sule Lamido, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria.

Mr. Lamido (Nigeria): Recent events have manifestly brought to the fore the importance and relevance of the United Nations in the pursuit of global peace, security and stability. Only last year in this historic Hall, world leaders at the Millennium Summit reaffirmed their solemn commitment to strengthen the capacity of the Organization in this very important area. Yet, two months ago, on 11 September 2001, the efforts of our Organization were temporarily called into question by terrorist attacks on the United States.

As a country which was directly affected by the first terrorist bombings in Dar es Salaam in 1998, in which our embassy building was destroyed, and because we lost nationals at the attack on the World Trade Center, Nigeria fully identifies with the rage and grief of the bereaved families and the victims of these barbaric acts.

Terrorism is a global menace that challenges the very basis of our civilization. It must therefore be confronted globally. That is why Nigeria fully endorses the prompt action taken by the General Assembly in condemning these attacks. We fully support Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), because the measures called for in the resolution would significantly reduce the capacity of terrorists to carry out such acts. Nigeria is committed to the implementation of the resolution's provisions. Let us sustain the unity of purpose and resolve that the terrorist attacks have generated by strengthening the cooperation and coordination among our countries. The terrorists and their supporters should be exposed for what they are: fringe elements undeserving of a respectable place in the comity of nations. Our strategies therefore should be informed, consistent and focused.

In some respects, the grave challenges that we face today also offer new possibilities for cooperation previously unimaginable. Our Organization has not only pursued the goal of international peace and security, but it has also served as a focal point for the promotion of other important agendas, particularly in the areas of socio-economic development, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights. These goals, which reflect the aspirations of Member States to build a new world free of conflict, prejudice, discrimination and oppression, must remain the enduring preoccupation of our common enterprise. For this, we have a clear compass, not only in the Charter of our Organization, but also in the solemn commitment of our leaders, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration. Let us strive to translate these commitments into practical policies for the benefit of our peoples.

My country's long-standing commitment to fostering the objectives of the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention, peace and stability is well known. It is regrettable that conflicts and wars continue to be waged in many parts of the world. It is particularly disheartening that Africa has had a disproportionate share of these conflicts and wars, with devastating impact on our societies and peoples. Yet, amid the apparent gloom, we see a flicker of hope. The process of peace and stability in Sierra Leone is gaining momentum, as the process of reconciliation, through a programme of disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation, funded by the United Nations, has continued to generate trust and confidence. We are equally encouraged by recent developments in Burundi, where a newly installed interim transitional Government is grappling with the challenges of national reconciliation and integration. These efforts attest to the determination of leaders in our continent to make a success of initiatives for peace. Nigeria is proud to be associated with these efforts. Our experience in Liberia and Sierra Leone has reinforced our conviction that, working in close partnership with regional and subregional organizations, the United Nations can facilitate the return to peace and security in conflict areas. Let us provide these organizations with the necessary financial and logistic support.

Apart from the commitment to durable peace and security, there must be a re-intensification of our resolve to eliminate weapons of war, both conventional and non-conventional. Of the utmost concern to us in Africa is the havoc caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted at the recently concluded United Nations Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects provides us with a clear road map for effective cooperation. Its effective implementation will attest to our commitment to strengthen the forces of democracy and the rule of law in the world.

We recognize the inexorable march of globalization and fully embrace the challenges of expanding opportunities in trade, finance, information

and communications technology which it offers. But the benefits should not be limited to only a small section of the international community. Globalization and the twin phenomena of liberalization and deregulation should work for all countries. The health and stability of the global economic system demand nothing less. For us in Africa, access to such benefits should be reflected in concrete actions and measures that will ensure our full integration into a new and fair global economic system.

Nigeria's call for a fundamental change in current debt strategies towards developing countries is derived from a keen appreciation of the impact external debt has on the economic growth and political stability of developing countries. The fact that, in spite of welcome initiatives on debt relief and debt management, many of our countries have neither grown out of debt nor been able significantly to service their debts in a sustainable manner, warrants a bolder and more imaginative approach, such as outright debt cancellation.

International efforts to resolve the debt problem should be bolstered by collective action to discourage the illegal transfer of funds from developing countries and the repatriation of such funds to the countries of origin. African leaders have established a clear linkage between our huge debt burden, the activities of foreign collaborators and the transfer of funds by former leaders and other individuals from our continent. We are concerned about the corrosive impact of corruption on our fledgling democracies and our social, economic and political development. Let us redouble our efforts to support an international instrument on the illegal transfer of funds abroad.

At the thirty-seventh regular session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which took place in Lusaka in July, the leaders of the continent endorsed the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The inaugural meeting of the Implementation Committee of Heads of State and Government on NEPAD took place in Abuja on 23 October 2001. Based on a common vision and shared conviction about the need to urgently eradicate poverty and place African countries on the path to sustainable growth and development, NEPAD has, among its key themes, the promotion of peace, democracy, human rights, social and economic management, regional cooperation and economic integration. We appreciate the support already offered, and we sincerely believe that this provides the best platform for a viable partnership with our development partners.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose serious challenges to development in our world. We appreciate the contribution of the international community in combating that scourge, as reflected in the outcome of the special session on HIV/AIDS. Africa's resolve to meet the pandemic head-on has struck a responsive chord, and we are grateful to the United Nations Secretary-General for his clear advocacy. I believe that we have reason to be encouraged by the progress made in establishing structures and a multilateral framework for greater cooperation and support in confronting the problem. Every effort should be made to ensure that the Global AIDS and Health Fund becomes operational by January 2002. Meanwhile, we should maintain the momentum so that in the shortest possible time we bring succour to those who live with AIDS or suffer from tuberculosis or other related infectious diseases. This is the expectation of the African leaders who met in Abuja in April this year to agree on a coordinated strategy on this health and development crisis. Our attention should also be focused on the campaign against malaria, as a follow-up to an earlier summit, which also took place in Abuja.

The rescheduling of the United Nations special session on the rights of the child to May 2002 should provide us with an opportunity to ponder the challenges which the world's children face today. For us in Nigeria, the session will coincide with the passage of far-reaching legislation, now before the National Assembly, to protect our children, and go beyond the provisions of the OAU African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which we have recently ratified, to revolutionize public awareness and the defence of their rights. Indeed, in mid-2002, Nigeria proposes to host an international conference that will, inter alia, address the issue of trafficking in children in our region. We look forward to the participation of Member States.

I cannot conclude without reference to the question of the reform of the United Nations system. Nigeria maintains that, in order for the United Nations to meet the complex challenges of our new century, long-overdue reforms of the Organization must be speedily undertaken. The reform of the Security Council, in particular, constitutes one of the major

challenges facing the United Nations today. Let us work assiduously to complete the reform process and thereby make the enlarged and expanded Council truly representative of the United Nations membership.

May I express our profound gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his leadership of our Organization in the past year. Nigeria rejoices with him over his well-deserved re-election, a reward for faithful stewardship and a signal of the trust and confidence of the United Nations membership in his shared vision for the future. No less significant is the award to him and to our Organization of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001. We wish him well and heartily congratulate the United Nations on that achievement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Comoros.

Mr. El-Amine (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Comorian delegation, which I have the honour to lead, and on my own behalf, I offer you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. We express the ardent hope that our work, under your enlightened leadership, will be successful.

My delegation and I pay a ringing tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the excellent manner in which he led the work of the previous session. As to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, I praise the merits of that man of such great talent and exemplary wisdom, and I also pay tribute to his dedication to the service of our world Organization. The Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to him, together with our Organization, is concrete proof of his outstanding values.

On 11 September, the entire world was plunged into gloom and anarchy. Terrorist networks defied the entire international community through their reprehensible attacks on American interests here in New York, this global, hospitable and cosmopolitan city — this capital of the entire world.

Thus, I cannot fail in my duty to convey, from this rostrum, the deep sympathy and compassion of the Government and people of the Comoros to the American people and Government following those painful, tragic and most unfortunate events. We offer our most grief-stricken condolences in particular to the families of the victims, whose terrible pain we share following these sudden deaths.

Furthermore, we were deeply moved by the loss of lives in the aeroplane accident that took place last Monday here in New York. We extend our sincere condolences to the Governments and peoples of the United States and the Dominican Republic and to the bereaved families.

In the course of the previous session and of the Millennium Summit, the central role that has been and must continue to be played by our Organization was broadly reaffirmed in many statements. The reform of the main organ responsible for international peace and security to make it reflect the realities of today's world was seen by all to be a priority. Today more than ever before, that role must be strengthened, because the United Nations responsibility requires it to be better equipped fully and effectively to assume it.

In this respect, it is appropriate to point out that this responsibility is of a different order. Above and all, it is the responsibility "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", to cite the expression of the Charter that governs our institution. This primary responsibility requires the Organization to ensure the peace and security of peoples. Today, crises of all sorts and the precariousness of the cause of peace in many regions demonstrate the United Nations highly difficult task in assuming that responsibility. The varied threats to peace that are spreading throughout the world call on us to focus greater attention on taking urgent international action, for no continent is safe from the danger.

Terrorism is one component of that danger. We must not allow extremist groups, regardless of their pretexts, to plunge the world into perpetual psychosis and to claim millions of innocents as their unfortunate victims. The attacks of 11 September were a harsh blow for all of us, a challenge to all mankind. The Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros therefore strongly condemned those hateful and barbarous acts, just as it condemns terrorism in all its forms.

Thus, in the framework of mobilizing efforts to combat terrorism, the conferences held in Doha and Dakar last month, in which the Government of the Comoros played an active role, reified the commitment of the Arab world and the African continent to this difficult but necessary struggle. In the same way, the meeting in Brussels brought the countries of Europe

together in a manifestation of the continent's abiding concern over terrorism.

In this approach, however, it is first necessary to define the notion of terrorism by clearly establishing what constitutes State, group and individual terrorism. We must then distinguish between terrorist acts and the legitimate claims of certain peoples to their right to self-determination, which indubitably cannot be exercised without confrontation, since it is often met with resistance and even oppression. Finally, it is essential that we in no way confuse terrorism with Islam, since we know, on the one hand, that every terrorist act is the expression of an extremism that is by no means linked to a given religion or nation, and that, on the other, Islam is known for its great tolerance and openness, advocating love of one's fellow man, peace and solidarity.

With respect to my country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, the concern of our highest authorities vis-à-vis this problem has led them to establish a national mechanism to combat terrorism, which has been placed under the leadership of the Prime Minister. In January 2000, my country also signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. In addition to such national commitments on the part of every one of our countries, it is clear that we will need to engage in international action by joining regional and continental forces to fight this scourge, which threatens world peace and destabilizes the economies of our countries.

This requires an objective political reading of the situation prevailing in areas of tension throughout the world. From that perspective, the situation in the occupied Arab territories, among other problems, calls for our attention today. The Palestinian people has the same right as every other nation on Earth to life, happiness, prosperity, peace and security. That is why, in respect for the law and in order to reach a just, lasting and definitive solution to this problem, the Comorian Government believes that an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, is necessary. From another point of view, the United Nations has the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of peoples. That entails guaranteeing the conditions for a better life by protecting fundamental human rights.

Indeed, the serious diseases affecting our countries, in particular the developing ones; difficult access to better education and health care; the famine that afflicts several regions of the world; the deterioration of our environment; and the violation of human rights remain the major challenges to our millennium. Some of these evils, such as famine, serious disease and the extreme poverty afflicting many countries, are in themselves very eloquent manifestations of a gap between North and South that we will ultimately have to bridge.

As to disease, AIDS is at the heart of our discussions and concerns, because it kills, empties entire regions and every year creates millions of orphans whose future is bleak. Thus, in the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, despite a relatively low rate of incidence, the Government remains aware that the country's geographical position and the prevalence of tourism in our island subregion are factors that could contribute to the rapid spread of the disease, given the influx of tourists and seasonal holiday-makers.

That is why our Government is devoted to making the national programme against AIDS a useful tool by giving it, as much as possible, the appropriate means, with the undeniable help of the World Health Organization and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The commitment of the Government of Comoros to this fight against AIDS is also expressed by its participation in all regional or international measures to this effect. Thus, a delegation from Comoros, led by His Excellency Mr. Hamada Madi Boléro, the Prime Minister, took part last June in the special session of the General Assembly on AIDS, held in this city. The recommendations from that session were borne in mind by our national authorities.

Speaking of diseases, I should not overlook malaria, which still affects many regions. In Comoros, it affects all layers of society and becomes a source of major concern for the national authorities. This is why, beyond the national provisions within the framework of the national strategy to fight malaria, my country welcomes the initiative to proclaim the period 2001-2010 the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Africa.

I spoke earlier about the gap that separates economies of the North from those of the South. From this point of view, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in May 2001, is of particular interest for our countries, and we count on more resolute commitment

from all of us, rich and poor countries, so that the recommendations made on that occasion and those that will be adopted within the framework of the conference that is currently being held in Doha, in Qatar, will lead to positive changes and lay a solid basis for sustainable and effective development by revitalizing our economies.

Our peoples expect much from our Organization, recognized as offering the best framework to guarantee the fundamental rights of all. This is why, confident in the United Nations to ensure the respect for unity and territorial integrity of our respective countries, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros urges our Organization to consider the legitimate claim of the Chinese Government with respect to the reintegration of the Chinese province of Taiwan in its natural entity. My country, especially sensitive to this problem, as we ourselves have had a painful secessionist experience, believes firmly in the need to find swift solutions to this type of situation, which could undermine the stability of regions.

The Millennium Summit prompted great hopes, which we must turn into reality, in order to thus recognize all the importance that it has in the eyes of humanity. This means that there should be a follow-up of the recommendations made on this occasion. We can only strongly wish that everyone will take due account of the true diagnosis made of our world in order to seek together the appropriate remedies.

Everyone's interest and survival depends on this, because when our neighbour's peace is threatened, no one is safe; likewise, as long as hunger, disease, ignorance, violence, injustice and poverty still subsist in certain regions, they will be a cause of shame for all humanity and a potential threat to peace and stability.

A year after the last session, during which I spoke from this high rostrum on, among other points, the general situation that prevailed in my country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, I would like to speak about certain aspects of the way the situation is evolving. I am pleased to announce today that the process of national reconciliation, led by the Head of State of my country, His Excellency Colonel Azali Assoumani, in which he opted for direct dialogue with our brothers from the island of Anjouan, is making progress daily.

Indeed, at the present time, a draft constitution, which would govern the future of the whole of the Comoros, has just been handed to the Head of State and will be submitted to a referendum before the end of this year. All of the political parties took part in drafting this document, and we also benefited from the assistance of the entire international community, including the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of la Francophonie and the League of Arab States with respect to expertise in constitutional law.

Alongside these efforts, provisions are being made to prepare the upcoming elections, for which the international community, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union, will also provide considerable technical assistance.

In this transitional phase towards the establishment of new institutions, the Government of Comoros is not sparing any effort to improve the current conditions in order to allow our population to lead a decent and acceptable life. These significant efforts must of course be supported by the international community in order to help the social sectors in difficulty. The great challenge for our Government, in addition to this reconstruction now under way, remains the achievement of harmonious social and economic development.

This is why, on behalf of the Government of Comoros, I launch an urgent appeal to the entire international community to continue to provide its valuable support in this period of national reconciliation for the reconstruction and establishment of institutions.

The secessionist crisis did not make us lose sight of the problem of the Comoran island of Mayotte, which is a major concern for the people and Government of my country. This island of Comoros, administered by France, is completely cut off from the rest of the archipelago, thus limiting the free movement of people and goods among islands and leading to considerable human loss for people who want to reach their families in Mayotte.

While the Government of Comoros is confident of the willingness of the French authorities to cooperate fully with their Comoran counterparts in order to find a lasting and negotiated solution to the problem of the Comoran island of Mayotte, we reiterate our desire to see the international community take part in this approach, out of respect for the law

and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations that admitted Comoros to the United Nations, once the new Comoran entity is set up to allow the return of Mayotte to its natural fold.

Lastly, I would like to extend our profound and sincere thanks to our fraternal countries and friends, to the partners of Comoros that accompanied us in every way they could, in the search for a lasting solution to the crisis that has shaken our country and is still present in our struggle to preserve and perpetuate the precious gains that we have made from the change of 30 April 1999. May all the crises that are affecting the world today see a fortunate conclusion in the interest of our peoples.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola.

Mr. de Miranda (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on behalf of my Government and myself, on your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly.

Your election is an acknowledgement of the many contributions made by the Republic of Korea to United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, as well as to promote the economic and social development of our peoples.

This session is being held during a period of major challenges to our Organization and the international community in general.

Peace and security continue to be endangered by many armed conflicts, particularly in Africa, as well as by terrorist activities launched systematically or sporadically against some countries. Extreme poverty and misery still affect large numbers of the world population, especially in my continent, where one fourth of our 800 million inhabitants survive on less than $1 per day. The HIV/AIDS epidemic, now affecting more than 36 million people, most of them economically active people, may seriously threaten the economic development and future of many societies unless urgent measures are taken.

To face these and many other challenges, the United Nations must continue to improve its internal structure, including the Security Council, whose membership must be reconsidered to allow for a more equitable geographic balance. In addition, its working methods should be restructured to ensure effective implementation of its decisions.

The United Nations must also endeavour to implement the action plans and recommendations adopted over the last decade, with a view to resolving problems in the areas of HIV/AIDS, social development, human rights, racism and racial discrimination, as well as terrorism.

At the last session of the General Assembly, my Government voted in favour of resolution 55/158, on measures to eliminate international terrorism. We continue to believe that its implementation will be essential to fighting this enemy. Terrorism is an international scourge with many faces. No country is immune to this heinous evil, and to fight it, we must cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels, under the leadership of the United Nations.

Angola reiterates its firm condemnation of the 11 September terrorist attacks, which victimized thousands of innocent civilians and endorses the use of force to eliminate terrorist networks and their support bases.

Having been subjected to terrorism for many years, Angola is pleased to join all other States in this anti-terrorist campaign. In this context, we have joined the other members of the Southern Africa Development Council to promote a forum to discus and identify the many faces of terrorism, as well as effective means to prevent and fight its activities in and from our region.

As to the African continent, we believe measures to combat terrorism should particularly address its sources of financing, such as the illicit diamond, drug and weapons traffic, and identify its networks in order to prevent the free circulation of its members.

In partnership with some countries, Angola has developed an international diamond certification system that has prevented diamonds originating from illegal traffic to reach international markets. Thus, we have helped prevent the financing of terrorist groups and their activities in many countries of our continent.

At this stage, the struggle against terrorism requires that, beyond the measures encompassed by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), special attention be devoted to the completion of an international convention against terrorism. This legal instrument could eliminate some of the ambiguities still surrounding the definition of this phenomenon.

My Government is firmly committed to peace in Angola, the African continent and the world as a whole. After a period of uncertainty, peace is slowly becoming an irreversible reality in Angola. The regular forces of UNITA's militarist wing, which had launched a large-scale military campaign to seize power, have been completely neutralized. Counties under their illegal control have been liberated and the Angolan Government now controls the entire national territory.

Large numbers of rebel soldiers and officers surrendering their weapons and being integrated into Angolan society is now a daily event. Today UNITA's military wing has only small groups, inadequately armed in the jungle or in remote areas of our large territory. Although they can make isolated armed attacks, they do not represent a threat anymore to Angolan democratic institutions or to the safety of most of our population.

My Government believes that the Lusaka Protocol continues to be a valid formula for resolving problems related to peace and national reconciliation in Angola.

The climate of peace that is starting to prevail is having favourable repercussions on the country's economy. Although considerable distortions and weaknesses still exist, reform efforts under way can help overcome serious social problems and enable general elections to be held in the near future in a truly democratic environment.

As a result of a long period of war, Angola still needs the support of the international community in its effort to alleviate the problems of poverty, displaced persons and refugees, and to rebuild its infrastructure.

The environment of relative peace would not be possible without the help of the international community, which has made the distinction between those who are committed to peace and democracy and the proponents of war, and has imposed Security Council sanctions against UNITA's militarist wing led by Jonas Savimbi. The most visible effect of these sanctions has been their contribution to a significant reduction of Savimbi's capacity to wage war and, as a result, to persuade a great number of UNITA members to give up their weapons and join the peace effort.

That outcome clearly demonstrates the efficacy of the sanctions as a means, and not as an end in themselves. That is why my Government favours keeping and tightening them until peace becomes irreversible in Angola. Nevertheless, my Government is still concerned with the findings of United Nations reports, according to which not all countries have fully adopted measures called for by the sanctions resolutions.

The Security Council resolutions on sanctions against UNITA were adopted in accordance with the powers given to the Council by the United Nations Charter. All nations are legally obligated to abide by and implement those resolutions. The resulting obligations on the Member States prevail over any inconsistent obligation to which they might be subject by virtue of any other treaty or international agreement to which they are, or may become, party. That principle should also be applied with regard to sanctions against UNITA.

The Angolan Government considers inconsistent the arguments put forward by certain Governments — some of which have a privileged relationship with Angola — of a supposed incompatibility between their internal legislation and Security Council resolutions. We appeal to those countries to reverse their position and to take the measures required. This, we believe, will contribute to the development of harmonious bilateral relationships with Angola.

Angola is firmly committed to a search for peace in the Great Lakes region, and particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are pleased with the positive results achieved lately by the peace process. In general terms, the ceasefire has been adhered to and foreign troops have been withdrawn. Angola, for example, has withdrawn 75 per cent of its troops. Namibia has completed its withdrawal, and both Zimbabwe and Uganda have started to repatriate their respective armies. Only Rwanda has not yet taken any step to signal its willingness to withdraw its forces, and therefore to fulfil its basic obligation as a signatory to the Lusaka Agreement and the obligations of the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council. We are hopeful that proper preparation of the inter-Congolese dialogue will lead to a substantive discussion of the relevant questions regarding the political future of the country.

As regards Burundi, Angola salutes the establishment of a transitional Government, which is a direct outcome of the Pretoria agreement, for which the mediation efforts of former President Nelson Mandela

were so crucial. We hope this step will soon lead to peace and stability in Burundi and good-neighbourly relations with bordering countries.

With regard to Western Sahara, Angola thinks it is necessary to find a solution acceptable to both parties that makes it possible to overcome the barriers to the implementation of a plan to resolve the conflict. My Government encourages the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to persist in their efforts in that direction.

The international community should not forget the problems of Somalia. The establishment of a Transitional National Government is an important step on the way to a peaceful resolution of the internal conflict there. Both the United Nations and the OAU should support that step in order that Somalia can return to its rightful place in the community of nations.

Angola is also concerned with the deterioration of the peace process in the Middle East, which has resulted from the recent intensification of the violence. We believe that a resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine will require negotiations. We therefore appeal to the parties to continue their dialogue and to abide by the agreements they signed and by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Angola is pleased with the advances achieved by the fraternal people of East Timor in their struggle for the right to self-determination and independence. The political, moral and diplomatic support that Angola and other members of the international community have been providing through the years in major international forums was decisive in enabling the people of the territory to reach a point where they can finally choose their destiny in freedom. The Timorese are now preparing to proclaim the birth of a new, independent, sovereign and democratic nation, but they will continue to need the support of the United Nations for the consolidation of their institutions.

The international economic recession will have a major impact on developing countries, and on Africa in particular, which has already suffered the effects of globalization. Of course, African countries cannot avoid globalization. But to engage in cooperative and collective activities, African nations must be based in strong States, something that hardly exists in the continent.

In the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the countries of the continent have found a way to break away from stagnation and to promote inter-African cooperation and achieve development. Angola is engaged in the New Partnership. Economic progress can be achieved in Africa through the promotion of trade among its nations, the establishment of healthy economic conditions and good governance, fighting regional threats — including conflicts and endemic diseases — and welcoming capital inflows. We hope that NEPAD will become a force for political stabilization and economic development in African countries, particularly those affected by serious divisions.

The International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, must be an opportunity to mobilize resources for development, particularly for the 49 least developed countries, 34 of which are in Africa, and to alleviate the extreme poverty under which more than 600 million people are now living.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Allow me to extend, on behalf of the people and Government of the Sudan, our heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the Dominican Republic and to the families of the victims of the tragic American Airlines crash that took place earlier this week.

We would also like to express our condolences to the brotherly people of Algeria, who recently suffered sweeping floods in their country.

At the outset, I would like to express to you, Mr. President, our warm congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are pleased to assure you of our confidence in your ability to lead our work to success.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Harri Holkeri for the able and efficient way in which he discharged the presidency during the last session.

I would also like to salute Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and extend to him our warm congratulations on his re-election to head the Organization for a second term. I am pleased to congratulate him once again on winning the Nobel

Peace Prize. We are confident that he will continue in his untiring efforts to lead the Organization towards its noble objectives of achieving a better tomorrow for humanity.

This session is being held at a time of extremely complex developments in the wake of the tragic terrorist acts that took place in New York and Washington, D.C. From this podium, I would like to reaffirm Sudan's condemnation and denunciation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We would like to express once again our sincere condolences to the Government of the United States and to the families of the victims.

The Sudan calls upon the Organization to rise to the onerous challenges, heavy burdens and subsequent repercussions of these events. This will require a coordinated and collective international effort to combat terrorism and uproot its causes and sources under the authority of international legitimacy. In this context, we must differentiate between good and evil — we must avoid putting both in one basket. We should not confuse the issues, because if we do, good might be transformed into evil.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize Sudan's readiness to continue to participate in and contribute to this effort. Sudan has ranked first among Member States that have ratified or acceded to international conventions on terrorism. At the regional level, Sudan was among the first countries to ratify the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. It has also ratified the Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism. We are in the process of ratifying the Convention of the Organization of African Unity on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. At the national level, we have adopted a law to fight terrorism. Through these measures, my country is helping to build a proper and sound foundation for combating and uprooting international terrorism in accordance with international legitimacy.

I would like to join those who preceded me by saying that terrorism does not belong to a particular religion, nationality, or ethnic group. It is an international phenomenon. Therefore, we must coordinate our efforts internationally to uproot it. We deplore efforts in some circles to link terrorism with Islam in cheap attempt to sow discord among the followers of divine religions and to portray the issue as a clash between cultures and civilizations. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance, and as such is far from having any connection to terrorism.

The proceedings of this session could not have come at a more opportune moment for us in the Sudan. We reaped the benefit of our common efforts supported by our brothers and friends to lift the sanctions that have been imposed on the Sudan by the Security Council since 1996. This will contribute to Sudan's further cooperation with the international community. In this context, the Sudan calls upon the Security Council to pursue this objective policy and review the sanctions it has imposed on a number of countries, including Libya and Iraq.

Mr. Dudău (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Sudan also calls upon the Security Council to dispatch a fact-finding mission in connection with the Alshifa pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan, which was destroyed by American missiles in August 1998. We believe that the bombardment of this factory was a flagrant mistake committed by the former American administration. It is a mistake that should be recognized and corrected, which would allow Member States and peoples of the world to regain confidence in the Organization and help remove a source of grievance and injustice. Thus the people of the world could live together in a world of justice, equality, security and peace.

The delegation of the Sudan believes that now is the time to end the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on certain countries, including the Sudan, which have negative effects on many sectors of our population, particularly women and children.

We in the Sudan look forward to a new era in our relations with the Organization following the lifting of the sanctions imposed on our country. We are pleased to confirm that we will endeavour to make every possible moral and intellectual effort to support the activities of the Organization that promote the well-being of humanity. We also anticipate that the Organization will play an effective role and make a new contribution towards assisting the Sudan in the implementation of its national development programmes, including the eradication of poverty and the rehabilitation of areas destroyed by war.

The Sudan, as the current Chair of two African regional organizations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, would like once again to recall the historic Declaration adopted by the Millennium Summit so as to confront the challenges faced at all levels by the international community in the twenty-first century. The Sudan hopes this Declaration will be translated into real and tangible action aimed at achieving justice and equality and the full participation of all Member States in the creation of a better tomorrow where human beings will be liberated from fear, poverty and destitution.

For us to realize our aspirations, this session should give special attention to reforming the Organization's organs, since they are the mechanisms through which the international community coordinates plans to realize international peace and security, comprehensive development and prosperity for all humanity. The Security Council tops the list of these organs. Member States have been calling for an expansion of its membership in the permanent and non-permanent categories, so that it will be more representative of the current United Nations membership. They have also called for improvement in its working methods and decision-making process, which should be more democratic and transparent.

The General Assembly should be enabled to carry out its role as enshrined in the United Nations Charter with respect to maintaining international peace and security, and should also exercise its duty to hold other organs of the Organization accountable.

We should like to emphasize the need to revitalize the role of the Economic and Social Council, considering that it is the forum that sets out international development policies. Its resolutions should be linked more to economic and social aspects than to political ones. The Council should be guided by the decisions adopted at the Vienna Conference, which considered the right to development an inalienable human right.

All countries that participated in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, unanimously confirmed their utmost determination to eradicate all forms of racism and xenophobia and to address their root causes in order to achieve justice and fairness for all peoples who have suffered and continue to suffer from the scourge of these heinous practices. The Sudan supported the implementation of recommendations from the Durban Conference, including those of the Group of eminent persons.

With regard to the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, the Sudan expresses its deep concern at the stalemate in the peace process and reaffirms the need for total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories in accordance with United Nations resolutions. This will enable the Palestinian people to regain its sovereignty over its territories and establish its independent State with holy Jerusalem as its capital, and allow sisterly Syria and Lebanon to restore their sovereignty over all their occupied territories.

The Sudan also reiterates its deep concern for the negative humanitarian impacts of the current military operations in Afghanistan on the civilian population. We welcome and support the mission of the Secretary-General's representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

With regard to Somalia, where the tragedies of the long-standing war spread negative effects to the whole region of the Horn of Africa, the Sudan delegation calls upon all Somali parties to respond to the voice of reason and complete national reconciliation in Somalia, allowing Somalia to fulfil its regional and international role.

By the decision adopted at the eighth Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Summit in Khartoum last November, the Sudan was mandated, together with neighbouring countries, to complete the national reconciliation efforts in coordination with Somalia's Transitional Government. In conformity with this mandate to restore stability in Somalia, the President of the Republic of the Sudan, Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, current Chairman of IGAD, has appointed a special envoy for peace in that sisterly country. The special envoy is engaged in intensive contacts with the countries of the subregion, the Transitional Government in Somalia, the different Somali factions and the IGAD secretariat. From this podium, the delegation of the Sudan calls upon the United Nations and the international community to support the efforts to restore security, stability and infrastructure in Somalia, so that the Government will be able to fulfil its commitments and establish peace and stability in the country.

We understand the concern of the international community over the continuation of the war in the southern Sudan. I would like to bring to the Assembly's attention the position of the Government of the Sudan with a view to ending the war and achieving peace through the following steps: an immediate, supervised and total ceasefire; regular access to humanitarian assistance for the population in need; negotiations on a political solution to the problem; and the reconstruction of the areas affected by the war.

The ninth IGAD Summit is to be held in Khartoum in January of next year. We hope that the questions of the Sudan and Somalia will be given the importance they deserve so that leaders will come away with a clear vision of how to end the war and restore peace in this sensitive region of the world.

In this context, I would like to refer to the statement of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan before the Third Committee last week. He stated that the war in the Sudan is not a religious war, as is repeatedly alleged by some circles wishing to distort the truth.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for their joint initiative for peace and reconciliation in the Sudan. I would also like to pay tribute to IGAD member States for their initiative to stop the war in the Sudan and the genuine efforts to restore peace in my country. The Government of the Sudan will continue its commitment to cooperating with the United Nations, donor countries and humanitarian organizations in order to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the victims of the war.

With regard to economics, the Government has maintained and enhanced reform and liberalization programmes and has introduced measures and incentives to promote local and foreign private investment. The Sudan has now succeeded in normalizing its relations with regional and international financial institutions. A positive sign of this is an increase in local investments and steady flows of foreign investment to the Sudan.

We are mindful of the accelerated pace of globalization in the domain of international law, especially in the field of criminal liability and bringing before international criminal authorities individuals charged with committing heinous crimes prohibited by international law.

In this connection, we believe it is imperative that all States and individuals should stand as equals before international law. The avoidance of double standards is a true safeguard against the distortion of international justice and ensures that it stays on the right path. We have made considerable effort in the past few years, in coordination with many countries of the world, to guarantee the faithful application of these standards and noble principles. To this end, the Sudan chose to follow words with deeds by quickly signing the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court.

International cooperation on disarmament should be based on commitment and adherence to international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, including the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the legitimate right of States to self-defence.

In conclusion, I would like to invite the Assembly to reaffirm the political will required to achieve international peace and security. I call upon all to adopt concrete measures ensuring that globalization becomes a positive engine of progress; that its advantages and benefits are shared by humanity at large, not restricted to a minority; and that globalization does not lead to cultural and intellectual hegemony and is not used as a means of political and economic pressure. If that happened, it would undoubtedly result in widening the development gap and the clash between the different cultures of the North and the South.

Let us all join together in a new era of international relations based on the rejection of conflicts and confrontation, on mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. To this end, I would like to reaffirm the Sudan's commitment and pledge to cooperate with the international community to move forward in realizing the common aspirations of all humanity.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Alsaidi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, first of all, to convey through you, Sir, our sincere congratulations to President Han Seung-soo on

his election as President of the current session of the General Assembly. I am certain that with his expertise and skill he will conduct the proceedings of this session successfully. I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the distinction with which he conducted the proceedings of the last session.

Our current meetings are convened amid extraordinary circumstances arising from the acts of terrorism committed against the United States of America on the very day set for the opening of this session. It is regrettable that the first session of the United Nations General Assembly of the twenty-first century should be convened in the aftermath of those alarming events. These events truly constitute a negative phenomenon that will have major repercussions on inter-State relations at the bilateral and multilateral levels alike. Furthermore, these events have convinced everyone that there is no alternative to collective endeavour through legitimate structures to confront the challenges of the future. We would like to stress the necessity of supporting the United Nations as an ideal framework for international cooperation, particularly at this stage when collective endeavour is indispensable for coping with the problems that now, in the era of globalization, affect us all to a greater or lesser extent. In this connection, we congratulate the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001, which has come at an appropriate time as an appreciative expression of the role of the Organization and the effective leadership of its Secretary-General.

The perseverance of the host country in ensuring quasi-normal conditions for the work of this session reflects a will to transcend the catastrophe and displays confidence in the triumph of reason. Permit me, as I stand at the heart of this great and wounded city, to convey, on behalf of the leadership, Government and people of Yemen, our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the American President, the Government and people of the United States, and to convey these sentiments in particular to the families of the innocent victims whose lives were lost in the tragic events of 11 September.

Although the scourge of terrorism has struck the United States this time, claiming thousands of innocent victims, the phenomenon of terrorism is not new. Indeed, it is directed against the whole world. These recent acts of terrorism claimed victims from 70 foreign countries, including Yemen. These acts were not targeted against the United States and Americans alone; rather, the target was international peace and security. Regrettably, the phenomenon of terrorism has worsened because of negligence in confronting it. We in the Republic of Yemen have not been spared the perils and threats of terrorism. Our country has been scorched by its fire and afflicted in many ways, but our appeals for timely, effective cooperation fell on deaf ears.

Today, in the face of this loathsome act of terrorism, the Republic of Yemen reiterates its stand, condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its causes and sources. As we proclaim the readiness of the Government of the Republic of Yemen to strive, within the framework of international legitimacy, for the elimination of terrorism, we also affirm our desire that those endeavours not lead to the suffering of innocent persons or to the practice of oppression that will result in the emergence of a new generation of terrorists.

We also affirm the Arab Islamic position that rejects attempts to link terrorism to Arabs and Muslims. Terrorism, as history teaches us, has no religion, no homeland and no identity. On the same grounds, Yemen censures the voices that stir up propaganda for a clash of civilizations or, to be precise, a clash of Islam with Christianity. Instead, we call for a meaningful intercultural dialogue and for the creation of common concepts centred on justice, human and religious values.

The desire to combat and eliminate terrorism makes it incumbent upon the international community to launch an unremitting campaign based on uniform and clearly defined criteria identifying terrorists, be they individuals, or collective or State terrorism. The international community cannot shirk its responsibility to oppose State terrorism — just as it opposes terrorism by individuals and groups.

Logically, it follows that the Security Council should put an end to the crimes committed daily by Israel against the Palestinian people forcing Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy, first and foremost of which are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In this regard, the Republic of Yemen proclaims that it welcomes President George W. Bush's statement on the necessity

of establishing a Palestinian State with all the elements of sovereignty. This declaration has met with ever-increasing international support. Israel must realize that its security is bound up with its neighbour's security and that its secure future lies in the inevitable acceptance of the Palestinian people's right to establish their own independent State and in its respecting the Palestinians' sovereignty over their territory.

Today's world is characterized by rapid transformations that, taken as a whole, are the natural labour pains that precede the birth of a new reality reflecting humankind's yearning for a more just and prosperous world. The current reality and nature of international relations differ from those of the 1990s; in fact, they differ to some extent from the prevailing situation only two months ago, to be precise, prior to the tragic and bloody events of September. These events diverted attention from globalization issues, the furthering of the democratic process and the diffusion of human rights to an endeavour to confront and eliminate terrorism. Everyone is aware that the exigencies of combating and eradicating terrorism demand adherence to democratic decision-making methods. Decisions must be adopted on the basis of agreement and participation, exactly as is required at the national level.

The logic of force has unquestionably become an outdated logic, which can in no way lead to the establishment of sound international relations or ensure lasting solutions to the problems that inevitably arise from time to time in inter-State relations. The Republic of Yemen has striven tirelessly to ensure the best means of achieving peace and stability at the regional and world levels, and has adhered to the course of resolving disputes by peaceful means and by accepting and adhering to the principle of good-neighbourliness.

On this basis, our political leadership, represented by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, has made continuous and unremitting efforts to help end the strife between the warring factions in fraternal Somalia. It hastened to welcome the outcome of the Arta Peace Conference and was among the first to support the provisional national Government, under the leadership of President Salad Hassan, as a legitimate entity representing Somali national consensus.

The ordeal that our Somali brothers are experiencing, both inside and outside the country, confronts the international community with its responsibility to provide aid and support to the provisional Government and to increase assistance to the Somali refugees in neighbouring countries, including our own. Our country has opened its arms to some 150,000 of our Somali brothers, despite the difficult economic circumstances it is currently experiencing.

Recent events have proved beyond doubt that there is an urgent need to amend the rules of international relations so as to ensure consensus in decision-making and collective participation in efforts to confront the growing challenges and dangers that face us all and that are not confined within the borders of any one State. That naturally makes it imperative to reconsider the policy of imposing international embargoes and sanctions that do not represent the collective will nor the required agreements, while the facts affirm their harmfulness and futility.

The sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people and the suffering of that people are a burden on the human conscience, and their continuation raises an increasing number of questions about the truth of the aims behind the insistence on their maintenance, now that the justifications for the decision to impose those sanctions no longer exist: Iraq has committed itself to implementing the United Nations resolutions guaranteeing Kuwait's security and sovereignty over its territory. My country has used its good offices with fraternal Kuwait and Iraq and continues to do so, with a view to finding a solution to the issue of Kuwaiti and other prisoners and missing persons, and cooperating in the settlement of this distressing issue. Here, we would like to express our happiness at the decision taken by the Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed on Sudan.

At a time when fraternal Libya and certain other States are still suffering from unjust embargo policies, there is an urgent need to reconsider those embargo resolutions that have become obsolete and have been overtaken by events.

One cause for optimism is the desire shown by both the United Arab Emirates and Iran, and the current contacts between them, to find a solution to the issue of the three islands of the Emirates in the Arabian Gulf. Yemen welcomes this move by the two fraternal States while wishing to affirm that direct talks or international arbitration are the option that will

preserve the security of the region and strengthen relations between the two countries.

Developing countries are still experiencing extremely difficult economic and social conditions, and the financial sources for national development investment are almost non-existent, since external debt and debt servicing consume most national development earnings. This is evident in the least developed countries, a group to which the Republic of Yemen belongs. In this context, we deem it essential to strive to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The Republic of Yemen wishes to participate in the preparatory meetings for the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Mexico, as it is an international gathering that will address, inter alia, issues related to the mobilization of the financial resources necessary for comprehensive development activities. These include commitment to pay official development assistance pledges, considering the development of ways to increase the domestic resources necessary for development activities and increasing donor assistance, particularly to national plans aimed at eliminating poverty in all its dimensions.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen is following a comprehensive development approach under extremely difficult economic circumstances. Large sums are allocated in the national budget for building the infrastructure, and particular importance is given to multidimensional programmes for the elimination of poverty. An effort is being made to ensure the participation of the various segments of civil society in the process of decision-making for development activities.

Seeking integration into the global economy, the competent authorities in Yemen are endeavouring to fulfil the requirements for joining the World Trade Organization. In this context, the Government has adopted a number of measures related to economic reforms and to finding new markets. However, in that regard there are obstacles facing the Republic of Yemen, as is the case with other least developed countries seeking market integration. An effort must be made to remove these obstacles by allowing access to world markets for Yemen's products and by affording it an opportunity to acquire the technology needed for development, particularly communications and information technology.

The process of globalization, which in its current form has some positive elements, should give due consideration to human needs and not be confined to market interests. Inter-State relations characterized by justice and shared responsibility, as envisioned last year in the Millennium Declaration, should prevail.

With regard to bilateral economic cooperation, my country's delegation would like to express its thanks and appreciation for the contributions of friendly States — in particular Germany, the Netherlands and Japan - that are providing assistance to development plans and programmes in the Republic of Yemen.

The most important trend in the world today is unquestionably the increasing move towards democracy as a necessary requirement for the achievement of equity, justice and social peace. In the Republic of Yemen, the democratic process has been a basis for guaranteeing the unity achieved on 22 May 1990 and has been organically linked to that unity.

In spite of the short time since its achievement of unity and its proclamation of commitment to the democratic process, my country has made major strides towards the achievement of political pluralism, the peaceful transfer of power and the guaranteeing of human rights, especially with regard to the participation of women in the comprehensive development process. The most recent of these achievements were the free direct elections for the presidency of the Republic last year and the local Government elections early this year. Our manifest desire to develop the democratic process led to the convening of the Emerging Democracies Forum in Sana'a last year, which was the first conference of its kind.

Lastly, we would like to express our desire to host the next International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, scheduled to take place in 2003. We hope that our request will be supported. The Conference will provide an opportunity for participants to get to know first-hand the country in the land of Sheba — a country that has practised consultation and democracy since the dawn of civilization.

In conclusion, I hope that our meetings here will result in the promotion of joint endeavours that fulfil

the aspirations of our peoples for a world in which justice triumphs over inequity and poverty and in which peace, rather than fear and war, prevails.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Chairman of the delegation of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express the profound sympathy and condolences of Cameroon to the Government and the people of the United States of America and of the Dominican Republic for the accident involving the American Airlines Airbus on 12 November in New York.

It was also with great dismay and sadness that we learned of the natural disaster that struck the brotherly people of Algeria with such severity. On behalf of the people and the Government of Cameroon, I would like to extend to that country our most profound condolences and solidarity.

Rarely has a session of the General Assembly been such a focus of international public attention or aroused the interest of the worldwide media to the extent that the current session has. The annual session of the General Assembly is a powerful symbol of the coming together of nations, the promotion of cultures and respect for differences and freedoms. This year, however, a shadow has been cast over our session by the recent, terrible attacks of 11 September, which took place not far from here. Cameroon addressed that subject at length during the debate on international terrorism that took place on 5 October. I should therefore simply like to reaffirm, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, our sincere condolences to the families that have suffered as a result of the tragedy, as well as our solidarity with the city of New York and the Government of the United States.

We must, of course, emerge from this period of mourning. We must unite our forces to eliminate the centres of destruction that are responsible for this tragedy. Each of the States Members of the United Nations, acting together, must nip international terrorism in the bud before it spreads any further. Lowering our guard when confronted with this great peril, or appearing to be helpless in the face of the criminal fanatics who are sowing terror, would expose each State and each individual on earth, turning them into potential victims of this lethal danger.

The President of the General Assembly, Mr. Han, comes from Korea, whose patient, wise and resolute peoples have long been engaged in a courageous political struggle to heal the wounds of the past. We are convinced that he will be able to guide the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session through this period of great turbulence. He can rest assured of my delegation's full support.

The delegation of Cameroon would also like to express its gratitude to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, who presided with great skill over the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. He perfectly reflected the modest, generous and supportive character of Finland.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and its Secretary-General is cause for hope and optimism for the development of the Organization. Cameroon welcomes that dual tribute. As the head of State of Cameroon said in his message of congratulations to the Secretary-General, Africa is proud that the Oslo jury chose to honour Kofi Annan. That award strengthens and reaffirms the unanimity and confidence of the General Assembly, which presided over the re-election — an election that seemed quite natural — of that great servant of the peoples of the United Nations for a second mandate as Secretary-General of our Organization.

Indeed, all States Members of the United Nations must be proud that the Nobel Peace Prize was also awarded to the Organization. It is the first time in the history of the United Nations that the Organization itself has been honoured with such a distinction. That gesture confirms — if such a confirmation was needed — that the Organization, in which we are all players, is truly a major instrument of world peace that embodies all of our hopes for a better world.

As an instrument of world peace, the United Nations took up, the day after the attacks of 11 September, both the struggle against international terrorism and the crisis in Afghanistan. The international community as a whole, through Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, was able to support the military intervention carried out against the presumed masterminds of those attacks, their networks and their Taliban protectors.

In the same way that we honour the memory of the victims of New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, we must also honour the memory of the

civilian victims in Afghanistan, including the three French and German journalists.

Cameroon, I repeat, believes that the alleged criminals must be held responsible for their actions. Moreover, we urge the international community to strive to prevent Afghanistan from re-engaging with the old demons of conflict between the armed clans that have defeated the Taliban today. Cameroon therefore calls for an immediate manifestation of the United Nations presence in Kabul.

Under the powers granted to it by the international community, in particular under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Security Council, with the essential support of all Members of our Organization, must swiftly undertake all necessary actions to restore and maintain peace in Afghanistan and to provide humanitarian assistance to people who have been left destitute and traumatized by an apparently endless civil war.

We must urgently prevent the flames of war from spreading inexorably throughout Afghanistan. We must also recall from this rostrum, however, that it is high time to douse the fires that have been burning for decades in Palestine, a land of peace. We must extinguish the fires that, conflict after conflict, are devastating the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, as well as those that have consumed Angola for over 25 years. It is high time that, like those who fought the fires in New York on 11 September, we act as firefighters to put an end to the fratricidal wars of the African continent, Central America and other disadvantaged regions of the planet. We must remain vigilant in preserving the particularly fragile peace in the Balkans.

We are convinced that the best firefighter to contain the ravages of war and the threats that loom over peace and security throughout the world is the United Nations. Without the determination of States, however, and the respect of those States for unanimously adopted rules, it is vain to hope to achieve the result targeted for the Organization by the Charter. The activity of the United Nations will have no effect if the resolutions it adopts to contribute to settling a conflict are not respected by the parties concerned and involved.

Why, after more than half a century, have we not been able to end the conflict in the Middle East, in which Palestinians and Israelis are in ever more brutal and violent opposition? Why can we not find the resources necessary to the United Nations to nip in the bud the fratricidal wars that have bled and disrupted entire regions of the African continent since the dawn of independence? These are the persistent questions that haunt international public opinion. Just as all men must naturally be equal before the law, States must be treated on the same footing of equality out of respect for international law and the principles defined by the United Nations.

The implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted at the Millennium Summit would enable great progress to be made towards the world of harmony that globalization is supposed to establish. Man and the safeguarding of his life and dignity, wherever he may live, must be restored as our priority. Man and the safeguarding of his life and dignity must once again be the central focus of our actions, thoughts and concerns.

The attacks of 11 September in the United States and the spotlighting of international terrorism must prompt us to take action, of course, but it must also and especially lead us to reflection. We have seen how the promoters of those who thus endanger the new world order also invoke a policy of double standards to justify their fanatical acts. We have also read in many of their communiqués their claim to be leading a crusade on behalf of a religious community that, according to them, has been treated unfairly by others. We understand, finally, that they have also cited the living conditions of many hundreds of millions of people, the poorest of the poor, as an argument for fighting that part of the world that plunders and dominates them in a spirit of complete indifference. We must do all we can to avoid giving such excuses and pretexts to individuals and groups who in fact have nothing but criminal motives.

Cameroon has maintained and continues to maintain that the United Nations must, more than ever before, continue to affirm the necessary links of solidarity within the international community and the need for balance in international relations. Support and development assistance for the poorest regions of the world are essentials recalled not only in the resolutions of the Millennium Summit, but also at the most recent Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held this year in Brussels. The recovery efforts of the countries of the South — inter alia, the New African Initiative on economic matters —

must be accompanied and supported by the most prosperous States. During the annual session of the Economic and Social Council last summer in Geneva, over which Cameroon had the honour of presiding, these principles and requirements were broadly recalled and, thank goodness, endorsed.

In spite of the commitments undertaken at one world summit after the other, the gap between the regions of the North and the South is growing wider by the day. Destitution, poverty, epidemics, the AIDS pandemic and the technology divide are not matters of fate. Over and above solidarity, a more just and balanced practice of commercial exchange, notably through the opening of markets to the most disadvantaged countries, could also help to bridge that gap. The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Mexico under United Nations auspices, should provide an opportunity for a deeper reflection on these priorities.

On 1 January 2002, Cameroon will take its place at the Security Council table on behalf of Africa as a non-permanent member. I would like to express on behalf of His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, all of our gratitude to all of the Member States of our Organization for the confidence placed in my country. In the current international circumstances, we realize the full value of this confidence.

Cameroon is committed to fully assuming its official duties in making its modest contribution, in the Council, to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, Chairman of the delegation of Singapore.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): It does seem strange to congratulate Minister Han Seung-soo on his appointment as President of the General Assembly so late in this session. But we live in unusual times. The United Nations needs clear leadership. With his distinguished track record in public service in the Republic of Korea, we are confident that Minister Han will provide it to this Assembly. We assure him of our full support.

We also congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri for his commendable leadership last year and, of course, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on the Nobel Peace Prize that they received.

The timing of this General Assembly indicates the difficult circumstances we are in. Never before in its 56-year history has the United Nations had to postpone the general debate. Clearly, the terrorist attacks of 11 September have already had drastic and immediate international consequences. The long-term consequences are still unknown. But we can be sure that they will be both powerful and wide-ranging.

For the short term, the events of 11 September have shaken an already vulnerable world economy. The developed world is suffering a growing economic slowdown. This is well known. Unfortunately, what is less well known are the damaging effects of the terrorist attacks on developing countries. In the developed countries, which provide the principal engine of the world's economy, the attacks have undermined consumer confidence, disrupted commerce and destroyed wealth. But these are temporary shocks from which the developed world can and will recover.

But what the terrorist attacks have dramatically highlighted is the reality of interdependence in today's globalized world. Joseph Stiglitz, a recent Nobel Prize winner, like the United Nations, highlighted this interdependence in a *Washington Post* article dated 11 November 2001. He said, "It used to be said that when America sneezed, Mexico caught a cold. Now, when America sneezes, much of the world catches cold. And according to recent data, America is not just sneezing, it has a bad case of the flu."

Hence, the developing countries, which depend on a healthy global economy for their hopes of growth and prosperity, face great dangers. The fear of terrorism may constrict the key arteries of globalization. We have already seen new precautions taken in many countries, at ports, airports, train stations, banks, media offices, government buildings, factories, offices, hospitals and many other public institutions. These precautions are important to protect innocent people in their daily lives. However, they also inevitably impose additional costs. These new restrictions on travel, on shipping, on national and international mail and on the free flow of goods and information everywhere are effectively a tariff imposed by terrorism upon the global community. Tragically, it is also a regressive tariff, one that affects the poorer members of the global community more.

If the arteries of globalization become increasingly constricted and cease to function effectively, developing countries will lose their best chance of growing out of poverty. This will only aggravate the hopelessness, marginalization, ignorance and fear that can breed terrorism. We must avoid this vicious cycle. In developed countries, the economic slowdown is already strengthening protectionist voices calling for restrictions on imports, the imposition of non-tariff barriers, anti-dumping duties, restrictions on migration and governmental support for domestic industries. A genuine concern over terrorist use of international financial and information networks could also be used as a justification for restrictions on the flows of international investment and information. And developing countries need these flows.

Indeed, even before 11 September, developing countries were not benefiting sufficiently from these flows. The greater part of foreign direct investment (FDI) flows mainly among developed countries. Of the remainder, 12 major developing countries take 75 per cent of private FDI to the developing world, while 140 developing countries take a share of only 5 per cent. The poorest nations of the world therefore suffer not from too many connections with the wider world, but too few. Indeed, the poorest 48 countries account for only 4 per cent of total world trade, while sub-Saharan Africa receives only 5 per cent of the total net long-term private capital flows to developing countries. At the same time, in the developed countries, tariffs on the export of goods of developing countries are 30 per cent higher than the global average. The fact that tariffs on goods of developing countries are 30 per cent higher than the global average is truly a shocking statistic, and we are surprised that this has not been highlighted before in key forums. All this shows that the poor countries cannot afford any further restrictions on trade.

In this regard, we are relieved that the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Doha, Qatar, which ended yesterday, has finally agreed to launch a new round of trade talks that we hope will keep the global economy on track towards freer trade and investment. Today's *Wall Street Journal*, which, as we all know, is a conservative journal, drew this link between the events of 11 September and the results of Doha:

> "In an effort to keep poorer nations on their side in the war on terrorism, United States and European negotiators went further than anyone expected to meet the demands of the developing world. ...
>
> "Ultimately, the United States and Europe made big concessions to the developing world — concessions fiercely resisted by pharmaceutical and steel companies in the United States and farmers in Europe."

This Doha meeting therefore confirmed that the needs of poorer countries will have to be addressed in the months and years to come, because as a result of 11 September, poorer countries will certainly suffer more than richer ones. To give another obvious example, tourism from richer countries is a major source of income for many developing countries. But the fear of flying — which I think has become quite real nowadays — engendered by the recent terrorist attacks has already caused airlines all over the world to cut flight schedules and in many cases terminate them altogether. It is already much harder to get direct flights from, say, New York City to many Latin American destinations. The World Travel and Tourism Council has estimated that the events of 11 September may cause the loss of up to 8.8 million jobs in the travel and tourism industry. Of these, only 2.3 million will be in the United States and Europe. The rest will be in the developing world. Clearly, the impact on developing countries dependent on the tourist trade will be enormous.

The record of the past 30 years shows clearly that countries better integrated into the global economic system have enjoyed greater long-term growth than have relatively isolated countries. I can quote no better authority than the Secretary-General, who has said,

> "Success in achieving sustained growth depends critically on expanding access to the opportunities of globalisation. The countries that have achieved higher growth are those that have successfully integrated into the global economy and attracted foreign investment." (*Making Globalisation Work For The Poor, The Independent, 12 December 2000*)

In a recent book, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression*, the author Harold James examines the fallout from a collapse of the integrated world in an earlier era. He provides a sobering historical perspective on what we are experiencing today. In the era before the First World

War, the world was in many ways a well-integrated place. Movement of capital, knowledge and labour among both rich and poor countries was much less restricted. The rise of protectionism and isolationism in response to this led to the Great Depression of the first half of the twentieth century. This long-lasting global recession ended only with the outbreak of the Second World War. This is not a cycle that we should repeat as we enter the twenty-first century.

One big lesson of 11 September is therefore that globalization, which we assume to be a powerful, irresistible force, is actually a very fragile construct, dependent on the will of its participants for its continuing existence. If it collapses — and the point to bear in mind is that it may collapse — developing countries could suffer more. Hence, the terrorists who destroyed the World Trade Center could also seriously damage the global economic system that represents the best chance that the developing countries have for long-term development, growth and prosperity. If the terrorists succeed, we will all be worse off.

Hence, at the recently concluded summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Shanghai, China, APEC leaders representing 21 countries, both developed and developing, and coming from three continents, unequivocally condemned terrorist acts as a profound threat to the peace, prosperity and security of all people, all faiths and all nations and pledged to cooperate fully to ensure that international terrorism does not disrupt economies and markets. We are not engaged here merely in a struggle between a few developed nations and a few terrorists. The whole world is involved in this struggle.

Following 11 September, we in the international community must act together to safeguard what we have achieved and what we have yet to achieve. The struggle against terrorism itself will take much time and stamina. To track down the terrorist groups and rip up their networks will be a difficult, long, messy and even tedious business, requiring the cooperative efforts of many countries. Countering terrorism must be an international endeavour, and in this international endeavour the United Nations has a critical role to play.

The United Nations remains the indispensable forum to mobilize international opinion and develop a strong political consensus against terrorism. Through the Security Council, it also provides a platform for practical cooperation, as we saw, for example, in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Within the United Nations system several bodies are already seized of the various dimensions of terrorism. One useful course of action would be for the various law enforcement and other agencies dealing with terrorism to get together to examine existing norms and practices and areas for further cooperation. Where such cooperation is already taking place bilaterally or trilaterally among countries, the United Nations can serve as a useful disseminator and clearing house of information and best practices.

In the long term, the economic and social conditions that encourage terrorists must be addressed urgently, and certainly after 11 September, we now know how urgent this task is. International economic integration, while ultimately the only guarantor of prosperity, is today incomplete in scope and uneven in its distribution of costs and benefits. Many developing countries remain imperfectly integrated into the world economy. These problems must be addressed by capacity-building and infrastructure development within developing countries, with whatever international assistance is necessary, and by the elimination of trade barriers and protectionism in the developed countries.

It is useful here to cite the latest World Bank report, which states clearly that abolishing all trade barriers could boost global income by $2.8 trillion — that is an enormous sum — and could also lift as many as 320 million people out of poverty by 2015. We hope that the World Trade Organization negotiators will bear this in mind when they commence the new round of negotiations after the Doha, Qatar, meeting.

To conclude, please allow me to quote the Secretary-General once again:

> "In an increasingly globalized world, none of the critical issues we are dealing with can be resolved within a solely national framework. All of them require cooperation, partnership and burden-sharing among Governments, the United Nations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society." (*A/56/1, para. 11*)

Global actions, facilitated by consultative leadership, are needed to address challenges of global dimensions. We hope that we can make a small beginning at this session of the General Assembly to do this.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Madina Jarbussynova, Chairperson of the delegation of Kazakhstan.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): This session that is taking place under extraordinary circumstances, when the whole world is still reeling in shock from the world's most terrible terrorist attacks, carried out in New York and Washington. This unprecedented action, aimed against the civilian population, has provided yet one more confirmation that terrorism poses a threat to the whole world and has highlighted the relevance of the proposals to join the international community's efforts in its common fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

Our country calls for international legal norms to be strengthened and for further mobilization of States' efforts to counter international terrorism. Taking into consideration the developments in the world that are identified with this growing threat, we support the initiative regarding the early adoption of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

Afghanistan's transformation into one of the sore spots of our planet was a matter of concern for Kazakhstan well before the events of 11 September. During the Millennium Summit, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, taking into account the potential danger of a spillover of the intra-Afghan conflict, proposed to convene a special meeting of the Security Council devoted to the consideration of the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia in order to devise comprehensive measures to settle the situation in the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Welcoming Security Council resolution 1378 (2001), unanimously adopted on 14 November, we share the Secretary-General's view that the Security Council should adopt a comprehensive approach to settling the situation in the Islamic State of Afghanistan and its political, military, economic, humanitarian and human rights dimensions. Such an approach, in his opinion, ought to be based on a careful diagnosis of the current situation in Afghanistan, based on the premise that no military solution to the Afghan conflict is possible, or indeed acceptable, since territorial gains achieved on the battlefield do not constitute a basis for the legitimatization of power.

The issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is of special significance to our country. This year we mark the tenth anniversary of our independence, as well as the tenth anniversary of the shutdown of the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, which represented an important step towards a nuclear-free, stable and safe world and its deliverance from the spectre of global Armageddon. The harm that was done first and foremost to the people of Kazakhstan was acknowledged by the participants of the conference entitled "The Twenty-First Century: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", which was held from 29 to 30 August 2001 in Almaty.

Nuclear-weapon tests have caused the destruction of the landscape, ecosystem, economic structure and traditional way of life of the people in the affected areas, which happen to be the historical centres of Kazakh statehood and culture. We are grateful to our partners who, in line with the three resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, are helping to rehabilitate the area of the testing ground, including the conversion of infrastructure. Yet, much remains to be done. We believe that the financial aid, experience and expertise of international organizations, donor countries and non-governmental entities play an important role in addressing the problems of the affected region. The outcome of the Almaty Conference has demonstrated that the well-being of the planet, which is so cherished, should be achieved not through threats and the use of weapons, but exclusively through peaceful means such as negotiation and dialogue.

Acknowledging the necessity of strengthening stability and security at both the regional and global levels, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, addressing the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, put forward an initiative to convene a conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia. Leaders of 16 Asian countries are to meet for the first time in Almaty in the first half of the year 2002 to discuss threats to regional peace and security, to arrive at a shared vision of forms and modalities of addressing such threats and to agree on confidence-building measures and the establishment of the structures and institutions of the Conference. The work carried out so far shows that compromise solutions are quite possible, even with respect to differences that seem irreconcilable. In that context, the Conference represents a forum based on principles that are conceptually new for Asia, namely,

trust and cooperation as a means to ensure security and stability.

Globalization, which has become a dominant factor in international life, opens up vast opportunities for social and economic development. At the same time the United Nations should actively help to solve current global trends associated with serious problems. We call for an increased contribution on the part of the Organization to improving the global environment for sustainable development and to bridging the gap between developed and developing countries. The development of a globalization model for the modern world — beginning with its economic component — that would fully take into account the interests of all countries could become a priority objective of the Organization within the framework of the current reforms at the United Nations. More active efforts by the United Nations to promote the integration of economies in transition into the world economy are becoming especially important for Kazakhstan.

Against the background of irreversible growth in global interrelationship, regional integration, which is actively supported by our country, is gaining momentum. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Central Asian Economic Community and other regional economic organizations, and will contribute as much as it can to building up their capacity and their international standing. We consider it a priority to develop cooperation with the United Nations in such areas as strengthening the social security system through efforts to fight poverty and unemployment; developing transportation infrastructure by maintaining and improving highways and railroads; solving the problems of rivers in border areas; and supplying drinking water in a number of regions.

We intend to take full advantage of the geographical position of our country and of the favourable location of continental transit routes. That endeavour will be helped by an international ministerial conference of land-locked countries devoted to transit and transportation issues, which will be convened in Kazakhstan in 2003 with the assistance of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

A transition to environmentally sound and sustainable development is a priority goal of the strategy to ensure the economic growth of Kazakhstan. Stabilizing and improving the quality of the environment in the Aral Sea basin are of overriding importance to our country. Kazakhstan has called, and will continue to call, for an integrated approach to solving the problems of the Aral Sea and for wider participation in the effort being made by the programmes of the United Nations system.

The participation of the United Nations is also important in solving the host of problems related to the development of the Caspian Sea region. The problem of the Caspian Sea has outgrown its regional boundaries and has become global. As an effective tool of regional and global economic partnership, the United Nations has a role to play to implement a policy of preventive diplomacy in the region in order to work out an agreed programme for the development of the Caspian Sea.

The process of globalization, which is characterized by growing interdependence among States in all spheres of life, presents new challenges for the international community. In those circumstances, multilateral efforts by the community of nations to find adequate answers to new challenges and threats play an exceptionally important role. Kazakhstan supports strengthening the central role and authority of the United Nations in efforts to ensure global stability and to build equitable relations between States and peoples based on mutual respect and universal values. We call for increased efficiency of the United Nations system as a whole, including the Security Council, its principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, Kazakhstan fully supports the need for adequate implementation of the decisions taken at the Millennium Summit and fully shares the development goals and objectives set out by the international community in the Millennium Declaration.

The recent decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and its Secretary-General is a sign of recognition of the Organization's contribution to strengthening international cooperation — cooperation aimed at the maintenance of peace and security for the sake of succeeding generations and in the interests of the prosperity of the peoples of all countries. That award has demonstrated that the United

Nations plays a special role in efforts to strengthen global partnerships for international purposes.

The President in the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: Tomorrow morning, Friday, 16 November 2001, at 9 a.m., the General Assembly will consider, as the first item, the fourth report of the General Committee, on action taken by the Committee this morning. Thereafter, the Assembly will continue with the general debate. The fourth report of the General Committee, document A/56/250/Add.3, will be circulated tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.